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THE JUDGMENT OF SOCRATES

BEING A TRANSLATION OF

PLATO'S APOLOGY, CRITO, AND THE CLOSING SCENE OF PHAEDO

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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THE JUDGMENT OF SOCRATES.

INTRODUCTION.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

ALTHOUGH very few of the events of Socrates' life are known, yet thanks to the peculiar literary skill of two of his disciples we are perhaps better acquainted with his appearance and character and general habits than with those of any other man of ancient Greece. We feel a certain intimacy with him as with Boswell's Dr. Johnson. There are innumerable references to Socrates in later classical writers, but our trustworthy information regarding him is pretty well confined to the works of his two followers, Xenophon and Plato. The former, besides several minor works devoted to the master, has left us four books of Memoirs, written with the ostensible purpose of defending his memory against the calumnious charges that caused his death. Now Xenophon was a most amiable gentleman and an admirable writer, but with the least possible tincture of philosophy or moral enthusiasm in his soul; and it is generally recognized that his Memoirs of Socrates, while presenting a faithful picture of the master's daily life, quite fail to grasp its higher and more universal meaning. The Socrates of Xenophon could not have wrought such a permanent revolution in thought as is connected with the great Athenian's name. But by favor of the generous fate that seemed

to rule over Greek letters, Socrates, the greatest man of antiquity, had as disciple the wisest philosopher and the most consummate master of prose writing the ancient — and we might add the modern — world has known. The Socrates who is still the inspiration of the best and noblest thought of to-day is not the simple Socrates who died in the jail of Athens, but a very complicated character that has passed through the subtle alembic of Plato's brain; so that to us "Socratic" and "Platonic" mean generally the same thing, and it is a task of the utmost delicacy to separate the original teacher from the creation of the disciple's fancy. Yet Plato was far from traducing the doctrine of his master; his service was rather to expand and develop. And if sometimes in the wide-sweeping logic and gorgeous symbolism of the younger philosopher the simplicity of the older seems quite obscured or even travestied, yet a little closer attention will discover the old Socratic teaching unchanged. The philosophy of ideas, and reminiscence, and all that is most distinctly Platonic, is but a development and not a negation of the lesson learned from Socrates' *self-knowledge*. As regards the master's personal appearance and manner of life, however, there is no such problem to give us pause. In these matters Plato and Xenophon agree so perfectly that we cannot doubt the veracity of the portraiture.

EARLY LIFE OF SOCRATES.

In the deme of Alopece, lying just outside of Athens between Mount Lycabettus and the Ilissus, Socrates was born in the year 469 B. C. His father Sophroniscus was a sculptor, and there is a persistent tradition that the son in after years followed the same

profession. He is said even to have won considerable repute as a maker of statues; and in the time of the traveller Pausanias two Charites standing at the entrance to the Acropolis were pointed out as his handiwork. But the later life of the philosopher might seem to corroborate the story that he quite despised and neglected the workshop, though we need not suppose that, as the story further adds, he gave himself up to idle courses. His mother Phaenerete, for whom Socrates seems to have entertained great respect, was a midwife; and, if we may believe Plato, the philosopher was fond of alluding to the fact and declaring that he inherited the profession, his office being to assist young men in bringing to the light the generous thoughts that lay dormant within them.

The writers of antiquity were zealous collectors of anecdotes and witty sayings; their memory for these was inexhaustible, and in general we may accept with some confidence the shrewd words they report of their great men. But on the other hand, they were less careful about the events of a man's life, and were ready in this respect to credit the wildest rumors and myths. In especial the childhood and death of famous men were soon enveloped in a halo of legends, and Socrates naturally was not exempt from this canonization. So, for instance, Plutarch tells us how at the child's birth his father inquired of the Delphian oracle about his rearing, and was admonished in reply "to suffer the lad to do whatever entered his mind, and to use no coercion. Neither should he attempt to divert the boy from his native impulses, but should offer prayers in his behalf to Zeus Agoraeus and the Muses, and have no further concern, for Socrates had in his own breast a surer guide than

any number of masters and pedagogues." Plutarch in his reverence for the master has repeated an idle legend which grew out of Socrates' daemon, or inner guide, and his connection with the oracle later in life.

It was also very common in antiquity to symbolize the intellectual relationship of noted men by associating them as teacher and pupil, often in despite of the most incongruous anachronism. So, if we could believe later stories, Socrates was the pupil of a great many famous philosophers, musicians, rhetoricians, and scientists, some of whom he could never have seen. In the Apology Socrates says that he received the regular education appointed by the Athenian laws, and this we may accept as authentic. With the other boys of his age he went to teachers who instructed him in music and gymnastics, — a very simple education, although the term "music" included a pretty thorough study of the poets.

But doubtless the young man's real education was what he himself picked up in his intercourse with the citizens of Athens and with the innumerable strangers who flocked thither. At that time Athens was at the height of her military glory, and was already the intellectual centre of Hellas, "the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence," as Milton calls her. All the currents of thought of that eager questioning world met there, and already the Athenians showed that curiosity which in their decay led St. Paul to say of them that they "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." We have trustworthy evidence that the young Socrates talked with Parmenides, when the aged philosopher of Elea was visiting Athens; he met and argued with Protagoras, the renowned sophist, and we may be sure

he let no famous stranger pass through the city without seeking to discover what secret wisdom the newcomer might possess. For this search after wisdom was Socrates' mission in life, and in his earlier years no doubt he approached each new man renowned in the Greek world for wisdom with modesty and with a hungering desire to learn. But as man after man disappointed him, as he found empty pretence taking the place of real knowledge, and the idle use of words passing for true understanding, and shallow cleverness claiming the praise of genuine insight, gradually the attitude and manner of this strange inquisitor took on a change. Instead of seeking for wisdom in others, he began systematically and imperturbably to expose their folly, teaching them that the understanding of their own ignorance was the first step toward the knowledge whose possession they already vaunted so loudly.

METHOD OF TEACHING.

This change in Socrates' manner took place apparently when he was about thirty years old, — the age at which great reformers are wont, it seems, to begin their labors, — and from that time to his death he must have been one of the marked characters in that city of notable men. This terrible debater of the market-place, this "Aesop of the mob," as Emerson calls him, with his great bald head and monstrous face, barefooted, and wearing but one robe, the same in summer and winter, was the strangest and most invincible talker the world has ever known, the more formidable because his insatiable curiosity led the unwary into making rash statements, while his unabashed assumption of ignorance gave no opportunity

for retort. Ignorant false pretenders to wisdom he bullied and mauled outrageously; the honest he left oftenest with a doubt still unsettled, but always a doubt that pointed the way to a higher truth; the young, with whom he especially loved to converse, he treated with a kind of fatherly tenderness, often very quaint and genial.

Xenophon's Memoirs are a collection of brief conversations between Socrates and various persons of the city, and give us an admirably clear picture of the man. "He was always in public view," writes Xenophon; "in the morning he went to the arcades and gymnasiums, when the market-place filled he was to be seen there, and the rest of the day you might find him wherever the most people were congregated." At one time we hear him talking with Aristodemus, "the little," pointing out to this great scoffer of the gods the beauty and design of the world, and proving thereby the intelligence of the divine government; at another time we hear him debating with the worldly Aristippus, who was afterwards to be the author of the philosophy of pleasure and *laissez-faire*, persuading that skeptic to sacrifice his ease and enter public life; we hear him encouraging the younger Pericles, son of the famous statesman, to attempt the restoration of Athens to her former glory and power; we see his cunning management of Glauco, a mere boy, whom none of his friends could restrain from speaking before the people, although he won only laughter and had even been disgracefully dragged from the bema. This strange genius, whom the young men followed in crowds, was fond of discoursing about friendship; he prided himself on his skill in bringing together men who would be of mutual help to each

other, and more than one of his reported conversations turns on this question. He was a persistent advocate of submission to the laws and of obedience to authority; and we have a curious dialogue between him and his son Lamprocles, who, apparently with some reason, revolted against the intolerable temper of Xanthippe, more intolerable than that of a wild beast, as the son declared. At another time Socrates visits the studio of Parrhasius, who by the testimony of Pliny first developed the art of composition in painting and gave animation to the countenance; and it is curious to find Socrates talking with him on this very subject, convincing him that the qualities of the soul can be portrayed in forms and colors as well as mere physical beauty. No doubt the adversaries of Socrates often tried to retaliate on him and bring him to confusion, but they reckoned without their man. Hippias, the famous master of rhetoric, most eloquent and learned, who is ready to answer any man's question, who will talk to you on astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, language, rhythms, melodies, genealogies, antiquities, virtue, who boasts that he can make his own clothes and shoes, a universal genius and a florid orator withal, — this fine sophist exclaims in disgust, "Really, Socrates, you are saying the same things I have heard from you over and over again!" "And what is worse," replies Socrates, "I am not only forever repeating the same words, but always about the same subjects too; but your learning is so manifold, that doubtless you never say the same thing twice about the same matter."

CONNECTION WITH WOMEN.

Socrates' relationship with women is not the least interesting phase of his life. A good deal of mystery hangs about his marriage. It is known that he was married twice, to the ill-famed Xanthippe and to Myrto; but which was his first wife cannot easily be decided; and indeed there were in later times idle rumors that he was the husband of both at the same time. The bad temper of Xanthippe was proverbial in antiquity. The stories told about her were often as absurd as they were entertaining. Socrates standing in a reverie, his wife scolding and finally throwing a pail of dirty water over him, and the philosopher's exasperating retort, "It generally rains after thunder," — is one of the best known of these scandalous anecdotes. Perhaps the story related by Xenophon in the Convivium may be accepted with more credence. Socrates there gives a humorous reason for marrying Xanthippe: "I see," said he, "that those who wish to become skilful horsemen get the most spirited horses rather than the gentlest; for they suppose that if they can bridle these, they will be able to deal with any horse. So I, wishing to mingle among men and deal with them, have taken this woman, knowing well that if I can endure her, I can easily get along with any man at all."

Several times Socrates mentions Aspasia, and we may well believe that he took pleasure in talking with this woman, who, besides her personal charms, was clear-headed enough to advise Pericles in statesmanship. In one place he refers to her as wise in household affairs, and in another as having instructed him in the art of joining together friends. There is, too, in

the Memoirs, an interesting chapter relating to one Theodote, a woman famous in Athens for her inexpressible beauty, and whom the artists sought after as a model. Socrates, one day, is carried by an acquaintance to an artist's studio where she is posing, and, as always, the philosopher starts a discussion: "Friends," said he, "ought we rather to be thankful to Theodote for permitting us this vision of her beauty, or she to us because we look at her?" It must have been a rare treat to hear this humorous inquisitor discussing such a question with the fairest woman of Athens. Theodote, like every one else, we are told, was charmed by his words, and begged for his friendship: "Come to me when you wish," replies the nonchalant sage; "I will receive you, if there is no dearer friend within."

PLATONIC LOVE.

The strangest, most enigmatical woman with whom Socrates' name is associated is a certain Diotima, a wise prophetess of Mantineia, who is said to have deferred the plague at Athens ten years by a sacrifice. In the Symposium of Plato the guests one after another pronounce an encomium on Love; but when it comes Socrates' turn, he as usual declares his complete ignorance of the matter, and can only repeat what he once heard from this learned Diotima. The dialogue which he then relates as having occurred between him and the Mantineian prophetess develops at length the peculiar theory of love which to this day is called Platonic, and which is so beautifully treated by Emerson in his essay on that subject. The conversation is a pure invention of Plato's; yet the elements of the Platonic love are seen clearly in Socrates' actual relationship with men and women, — and this half-

mystic passion has had so much to do with raising the doctrine and example of Socrates from the region of mere philosophy into that of a religion, one might say, which has broadened and deepened the spiritual life of the world, that it may be well to pause for a while upon it. Jowett, in his introduction to the Symposium, has written one of his wise paragraphs on the subject, and I cannot do better than quote it here: "Diotima," he writes, "the prophetess of Mantineia, whose sacred and superhuman character raises her above the ordinary proprieties of women, has taught Socrates far more than this about the art and mystery of love. She has taught him that love is another aspect of philosophy. The same want in the human soul which is satisfied in the vulgar by the procreation of children may become the highest aspiration of intellectual desire. As the Christian might speak of hungering and thirsting after righteousness; or of divine loves under the figure of human (cp. Eph. v. 32: 'This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church'); as the mediaeval saint might speak of the 'fruitio Dei,' so the absorption and annihilation of all other loves and desires in the love of knowledge is a feeling that was at least intelligible to the Greek of the fifth century before Christ. To most men reason and passion appear to be antagonistic both in idea and fact. The union of the greatest comprehension of knowledge with the burning intensity of love is a contradiction in nature which may have existed in a far-off primeval age in the mind of some Hebrew prophet or other Eastern sage, but has now become an imagination only. Yet this 'passion of the reason' is the theme of the Symposium of Plato. And as there is no im-

possibility in supposing that 'one king, or son of a king, may be a philosopher,' so also there is a probability that there may be some few — perhaps one or two in a whole generation — in whom the light of truth may not lack the warmth of desire. And if there be such natures, no one will be disposed to deny that 'from them flow most of the benefits of individuals and states.'"

THE DAEMON OF SOCRATES.

But the words of Diotima have still further interest in throwing light on a most obscure phase of Socrates' inner life. Love, she says, is neither mortal nor immortal, but something intermediate between the two, a great spirit or *daemon*. Now it is well known that Socrates believed he was guided all through life by some inner voice, some peculiar daemonic influence; and from that day to this men have not ceased trying to explain the nature of this mystery. In the earliest Greek, in Homer first of all, the daemons or daemonic powers are scarcely distinguishable from the gods, and indeed there and very commonly in later authors the two terms are interchangeable. But from the beginning there was a tendency to speak of the daemonic powers more vaguely, to personify them less clearly than the gods. Apart from the pantheon of deities who were worshipped under special names and with more or less clearly defined cults, the Greeks felt in the world about them the influence of more obscure agencies, which in the course of time became distinguished from the divine as daemonic. So a man whose actions appeared unaccountable was said to be under daemonic influence or possession. And as such lack of self-government was deprecated by the

Greeks, these daemonic powers in the end came to have a sinister character, and by the Christians were regarded as equivalent to devils; and in this sense the word lingers in modern languages. But this sinister meaning, though perhaps lurking in the word from remote antiquity, was very far from universal in the times of Socrates and Plato. The daemonic powers were to Plato intermediate between the gods and men; from the former they brought down to man the blessings of heaven, and from man they carried petitions and prayers of thanksgiving to the gods. They were the medium by which the divine part of man, locked in its earthly prison, communicated with the outer spiritual world; and in some such sense as this is to be understood the daemon of Socrates.

This peculiar guide, which came to him in his early youth, manifested itself by dreams and visions and as it were by an inner voice. If we may credit Xenophon, it admonished him to do this and to forego that, but according to the more precise and probably truer account of Plato, it came only as a negative warning against wrong-doing and misfortune. It was nothing akin to what would have been called in the Middle Ages a familiar or a guardian angel, for it came to Socrates without distinct personality. It was not hallucination, for the paradox is beyond credence which would find such signs of disorganization in one preëminent above all for sanity of mind and body. It was not conscience, as some have interpreted, for it was prophetic rather than retrospective, and contained nothing of the character of remorse. And indeed the word "conscience" as we understand it would not apply to a man of that age. The Greeks knew of "the unwritten and inevitable laws of hea-

ven," and Socrates himself mentions them, yet even the transgression of these, sacred as they were, could hardly be said to awaken the pangs of conscience, though it might cause remorse; for these divine laws did not have quite the same personal origin as those commandments which bind the Christian, nor did man's relation to the gods involve his whole emotional nature so profoundly as under the Christian faith. The guide of Socrates had nothing to do with conscience; it might rather be likened to the half-heard voice of warning and inspiration, the *bath-kol*, or daughter of a voice, as Maimonides quaintly calls it, which came as a guide to the prophets of old.

There is a passage in the Memoirs which may throw some light on this obscure subject. Socrates is talking with Euthydemus and expatiating on the kindness of the gods, who have given us faculties of perception, and above these reason to guide us, and, where reason fails, the oracles to warn us of the future. "'To you, O Socrates,' says Euthydemus, 'the gods seem to be even more friendly than to other men; you need not to ask them, yet they point out to you what to do and what not.' 'And that they are ready to favor all men in this way,' replies Socrates, 'you yourself will know, if you do not wait to behold the visible forms of the deities, but are content seeing their works to worship these, and thus do honor to the gods themselves.'" Socrates would seem to say that this revelation, so peculiar to himself, was yet open to all men who like him could live in perfect harmony with the world and in blameless faith. As the birds and beasts of the forest by some subtle sympathy foretell the changes of weather and the revolution of the seasons, and as men whose lives are passed in

contact with nature acquire marvellous faculties of perception, so also Socrates, by the perfect balance of his powers and by the inner harmony of his life, would seem in some extraordinary way to have been in sympathy with the laws of the moral world. This bond of sympathy was very properly likened to those mediating daemonic agencies whose description Plato puts in the mouth of the prophetess Diotima, and among whom was Love, for the Platonic love is very close to that sympathy which grows ever deeper and wider with widening knowledge.

HIS DIVINE MISSION.

Besides the daemonic signs Socrates had, as he thought, a direct command from the gods to prosecute his mission of inquiry. The story of the oracular response, proclaiming Socrates the wisest of men, and of its influence on his life, is related in the Apology, and need not be repeated here. He himself connected this Delphic utterance with the famous command, Know thyself, which was inscribed, as it were a salutation of the god, over the entrance to the shrine at Delphi; and although with his customary irony he would turn this understanding of himself into a confession of ignorance, yet in truth, his peculiar interpretation of the ancient saying was the keynote to all that he taught, positive as well as negative, and from it his mission received what he recognized as a divine sanction.

So it was that to accomplish his end he felt justified in surrendering all that the world usually holds precious, and in avoiding what to most men seemed then the first duties of a citizen. He was sent to rouse the Athenians to a higher life, and to Athens he

clung more persistently than the very maimed and halt. Scarcely was he to be found outside of the city walls, for, as he said, he was a lover of knowledge, and he could learn from the men of the city, but not from fields and trees. And as for travelling, he had never except once gone a pleasure journey. His private affairs were so neglected that his poverty was notorious; and he even refrained from public business, fearing he should lose his life prematurely in the turmoil of the times. It was an old saying in Greece that it was better to take sides with even the worst faction than with no party at all; and how shall we excuse Socrates for standing apart when the voice and arm of every good man was needed to save the constitution, nay, even the very existence of the state? We can only take him at his word. He felt no power within him to govern; he believed he had a great work to fulfil with individual men, and so deliberately kept aloof from public affairs, knowing he was too honest a man to enter that arena and save his life; and the reckless executions in Athens fully justified his precaution. Yet when political duties devolved on him unsought, he never shirked, and courageously opposed both the fury of the people and the despotism of the Thirty. As a soldier he served through two campaigns, and on both occasions gave signal proof of his fortitude and bravery. In the Symposium of Plato we have a most graphic picture of him as a soldier, given by his young admirer Alcibiades, and it may be well to quote Shelley's translation of this famous passage.

ALCIBIADES DESCRIBES SOCRATES.

"At one time we were fellow-soldiers, and had our mess together in the camp before Potidaea. Socrates

there overcame not only me, but every one besides, in endurance of toils: when, as happens in a campaign, we were reduced to few provisions, there were none who could sustain hunger like Socrates; and when we had plenty, he alone seemed to enjoy our military fare. He never drank much willingly, but when he was compelled, he conquered all even in that to which he was least accustomed; and, what is most astonishing, no person ever saw Socrates drunk, either then or at any other time. In the depth of winter (and the winters there are excessively rigid) he sustained calmly incredible hardships: and amongst other things, while the frost was intolerably severe, and no one went out of their tents, or if they went out, wrapt themselves up carefully, and put fleeces under their feet, and bound their legs with hairy skins, Socrates went out only with the same cloak on that he usually wore, and walked barefoot upon the ice, more easily indeed than those who had sandalled themselves so delicately: so that the soldiers thought that he did it to mock their want of fortitude. It would indeed be worth while to commemorate all that this brave man did and endured in that expedition.

"In one instance he was seen early in the morning, standing in one place, wrapt in meditation; and as he seemed not to be able to unravel the subject of his thoughts, he still continued to stand as inquiring and discussing within himself; and when noon came, the soldiers observed him, and said to one another, 'Socrates has been standing there thinking, ever since the morning.' At last some Ionians came to the spot, and, having supped, as it was summer, bringing their blankets, they lay down to sleep in the cool: they observed that Socrates continued to stand there the

whole night until morning, and that, when the sun rose, he saluted it with a prayer, and departed.

"I ought not to omit what Socrates is in battle. For in that battle, after which the Generals decreed to me the prize of courage, Socrates alone of all men was the saviour of my life, standing by me when I had fallen and was wounded, and preserving both myself and my arms from the hands of the enemy. On that occasion I entreated the Generals to decree the prize, as it was most due, to him. And this, O Socrates, you cannot deny, that when the Generals, wishing to conciliate a person of my rank, desired to give me the prize, you were far more earnestly desirous than the Generals that this glory should be attributed, not to yourself, but me.

"But to see Socrates when our army was defeated, and scattered in flight at Delium, was a spectacle worthy to behold. On that occasion I was among the cavalry, and he on foot, heavily armed. After the total rout of our troops, he and Laches retreated together: I came up by chance, and seeing them, bade them be of good cheer, for that I would not leave them. As I was on horseback, and therefore less occupied by a regard of my own situation, I could better observe than at Potidaea the beautiful spectacle exhibited of Socrates on this emergency. How superior was he to Laches in presence of mind and courage! Your representation of him on the stage, O Aristophanes, was not wholly unlike his real self on this occasion; for he walked and darted his regards around with a majestic composure, looking tranquilly both on his friends and enemies; so that it was evident to every one, even from afar, that whoever should venture to attack him would encounter a

desperate resistance. He and his companion thus departed in safety; for those who are scattered in flight are pursued and killed, whilst men hesitate to touch those who exhibit such a countenance as that of Socrates, even in defeat."

By the side of this account of the soldier may be placed the companion picture of the philosopher, found in the same dialogue and spoken by the same person. It sets forth very clearly the strange dual nature of the man. Without he might be likened to the rude figures of Silenus, the grotesque companion of Bacchus, which were fashioned by the artificers as caskets to hold within precious images of the gods in gold and silver. The translation is again Shelley's: —

"I will begin the praise of Socrates by comparing him to a certain statue. Perhaps he will think that this statue is introduced for the sake of ridicule; but I assure you that it is necessary for the illustration of truth. I assert, then, that Socrates is exactly like those Silenuses that sit in the sculptors' shops, and which are carved holding flutes or pipes, but which when divided in two are found to contain withinside the images of the gods. I assert that Socrates is like the Satyr Marsyas; that your form and appearance are like these Satyrs, I think that even you will not venture to deny; and how like you are to them in all other things, now hear. Are you not scornful and petulant? If you deny this, I will bring witnesses. Are you not a piper, and far more wonderful a one than he? for Marsyas and whoever now pipes the music that he taught, that music which is of heaven, and described as being taught by Marsyas, enchants men through the power of the mouth; for, if any musician, be he skilful or not, awakens this music, it alone

enables him to retain the minds of men, and from the divinity of its nature makes evident those who are in want of the gods and initiation. You differ only from Marsyas in this circumstance, that you affect without instruments, by mere words, all that he can do; for, when we hear Pericles, or any other accomplished orator, deliver a discourse, no one, as it were, cares anything about it. But when any one hears you, or even your words related by another, though ever so rude and unskilful a speaker, be that person a woman, man, or child, we are struck and retained, as it were, by the discourse clinging to our minds. . . .

"At first I forgot to make you observe how like his discourses are to those Satyrs when they are opened; for, if any one will listen to the talk of Socrates, it will appear to him at first extremely ridiculous; the phrases and expressions which he employs fold around his exterior the skin, as it were, of a rude and wanton Satyr. He is always talking about brass-founders, and leather-cutters, and skin-dressers; and this is his perpetual custom, so that any dull and unobservant person might easily laugh at his discourse. But, if any one should see it opened, as it were, and get within the sense of his words, he would then find that they alone of all that enters into the mind of man to utter had a profound and persuasive meaning, and that they were most divine; and that they presented to the mind innumerable images of every excellence, and that they tended towards objects of the highest moment, or rather towards all that he who seeks the possession of what is supremely beautiful and good need regard as essential to the accomplishment of his ambition."

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCRATES.

It is not hard to understand how this curious double nature, this "rare coincidence, in one ugly body, of the droll and the martyr, the keen street and market debater with the sweetest saint known to any history at that time," was able to fascinate the inquisitive and the more serious of the Athenian youth. But Socrates, dearly as he loved his native city, belonged not to Athens alone, but to the world. This wider influence is due in part to the genius of his great disciple Plato, who developed the teaching of the master into a splendid body of philosophy, — but not entirely, nor is writing the only means by which a man's influence may lay hold of posterity. Socrates wrote nothing, and he cannot be said to have founded a philosophical system; he made little or no use of metaphysical language, and indeed one may say that philosophy ceases to be vital just in proportion as it involves itself in technical terms. But Socrates gave the impulse to a new way of approaching the perennial questions that interest and trouble man's soul. By his life and death he gave to doubting men renewed assurance that virtue is the only real happiness, more to be desired than riches or honor or power or life itself, and that there is a lamp of truth to guide us in virtue's path.

The Greeks themselves saw the beginning of their philosophy, as they found the origin of everything else, in Homer, whom Plato half sportively calls the first of those philosophers who made continual flux and change the law of the world. For us Greek philosophy begins about the year 600 B. C., when Thales of Miletus first attempted to account for the origin

of things without the intervention of mythology. Thales saw in water the source of the world and of the gods themselves; and after him followed a succession of philosophers who tried in various ways to explain the physical universe, making no distinction, according to Aristotle, between matter and the moving or governing force. Anaxagoras first introduced the conception of mind as a guiding principle apart from matter; and Socrates in all probability knew Anaxagoras in Athens, and may even have been his pupil in some indefinite way. We are told in the Phaedo that Socrates as a young man was enthusiastic over this sort of natural philosophy, and thought it a prodigious thing to know the causes of creation and dissolution. Baffled, however, in his efforts to acquire this knowledge, he was at last directed to the books of Anaxagoras, and here he thought he had found in the new doctrine of "mind" the wisdom he had so long sought. But once again he was deceived, for Anaxagoras was still in bondage to physical causes and made no satisfactory use of his boasted theory of "the mind," so that Socrates in disgust turned away from these philosophers altogether and declared the utter futility of natural science.

And after all, why should man pry into the heavens above and into the earth beneath when he is still ignorant of himself and his own soul? This was the great revolution brought about by Socrates: he taught men to look into themselves, for through self-knowledge lay the only path to truth and virtue and happiness; and these three are one. Justice, temperance, courage, — all the virtues are but different manifestations of the one comprehensive virtue which is wisdom or self-knowledge. The reasoning of Socrates is quite sim-

ple: every man aims to do what he thinks best for himself, and if he does what injures himself, it must be through ignorance; virtue is the knowledge of what is truly best, what is best for the real self. Socrates takes no account of the estrangement of the will and the understanding, of that morbid state which led Ovid to cry out: "I see the better things and approve, I follow the worse." He had indeed never dissected the soul into these divergent faculties; and in Greece until his time the harmony of man's nature scarcely permitted such an analysis. The separation, first carefully noted by Plato, came with this very self-consciousness which was introduced into Greek life by Socrates more than any other. If to us, with our larger experience, so simple a view of human nature may seem superficial, we must yet remember that to-day the great struggle for each man is to restore himself to just that state of health wherein the will and the understanding are in harmonious equilibrium. For this reason, if for no other, the example and teaching of Socrates are still of inestimable value to the world.

SOCRATES AND THE SOPHISTS.

But Socrates was not alone in bringing philosophy down from the skies to the human heart. About this time sprang up that remarkable class of teachers called sophists, who travelled from city to city, lecturing on every kind of subject, and especially teaching men the art of rhetoric. They were not a philosophical sect, and had as a body no special doctrine to proclaim; but they all, without offering any sure guide in exchange, influenced their hearers to question the old traditional notions of right and wrong. "Man is the measure of all things," was the maxim of Protagoras,

and may stand as the watchword of the sophists in general. Now the same words might in a way sum up the teaching of Socrates, who was indeed often classed with the sophists; but there is a radical difference in their application of the maxim. To Protagoras man is the individual, and what seems true to one may be false to another, what seems right to one may be wrong to another, and each man is a measure to himself; whereas Socrates in his pursuit of self-knowledge sought to discover within himself the origin of those "unwritten laws" which are the source of universal virtue, the same in all men, the bond connecting mankind and the gods. The sophists, instructing men in the art of practical debate, would teach them how "to make the worse appear the better cause," not in the interests of vice, to be sure, but simply holding truth as a light or impossible thing; Socrates believed the only occupation worthy of a free man was the earnest discussion of truth and virtue among friends.

It is one of the curious acts of an ironical Fate that Protagoras and his fellows were loaded with honors in Athens and throughout Greece, whereas Socrates was ridiculed on the stage and finally suffered death for that very dangerous side of sophistical teaching which he sought to counteract. The Clouds of Aristophanes is a strangely humorous caricature, which represents Socrates as everything which he really was not. He is there set forth as a master of a school called the "phrontisterion," or thinking-shop, himself a pale, woe-begone student and his scholars only worse. When first seen he is swinging aloft in a basket, the better to observe the sun; and in place of Zeus he has set up a new god by the name

of *Vortex*. The whole play is as comical as it is scathing, yet tradition states that during the performance Socrates, with his accustomed imperturbability, arose in his place that the audience might compare his own grotesque face with the mask of the actor personating him on the stage.

HIS DEATH.

The play alone might pass as a harmless satire, but it signified only too well the growing discontent with Socrates in the city. The causes of the popular feeling against him are set forth in the Apology, and need not be repeated. One of the causes, however, may have been more important than his passing notice of it might lead us to suppose. Critias and Alcibiades and others of the aristocratical party, now justly odious to the people, had in their youth been followers of Socrates, and despite his precaution in avoiding public affairs, politics may thus have entered into his final ruin.

In the year 399 B. C. he was arraigned before one of the courts on a charge of impiety, and was condemned. The story of his refusal to escape by bribery and of his last hours is told in the translations which follow. His death came at the turning-point of Greek history; and from that time on we have to trace the gradual decline of the strength and beauty of that old life, and to follow the development of the new spirit which was to give birth to the modern world. The heroic struggle of Socrates with the Athenian people may be regarded as typical of the long contest that was to follow. The old harmony of Greek life was broken, by the accession of self-consciousness, into two divergent currents: the nation as a body pursued

the easy path of sophistry into an ever deeper and deeper degradation of moral indifference; a few men, handing on the new ideal of the master and developing its latent philosophy, prepared the way for the profounder and in some respects antagonistic revelation of Christianity. Yet we must never forget that the teaching of the Athenian sage still in its simplest form persists through all its later developments, and still is one of the powers working for truth and righteousness in the world.

Plato divided the soul into three faculties, — the reason, what we should call the will, and the emotional nature. One might say, in summing up the influence of Socrates, and comparing him with other great world-teachers, that he appealed chiefly to the reason, making knowledge and virtue one; that Buddha founded his religion on the supremacy of the human will; and that in Christianity the law of love is based on the emotional nature of man. Such an analysis must not be pressed too far: for in Plato, at least, the will and the law of love receive ample recognition; Buddha was too much a Hindu to overlook the necessity of knowledge, and in his doctrine the tenderest pity for the whole sentient world could find a place; and in the religion of Christ for a time the mystical sects of gnosticism almost won the upper hand, while the nature of the will was first clearly defined in its long debates with heresy. Yet for their final influence these reformers do appeal to these three separate faculties of man; and bearing this in mind, there is a strange interest attached to the accounts of their last days: — the divine pathos of the scene in Jerusalem and the desolation of the last cry of a broken heart, showing by what steps of agony and self-surrender

salvation must be bought; the calm and victorious death of the aged Hindu, discoursing with his followers to the end, without doubt or grief, voluntarily laying down his life when his work is done, and leaving as his last command the simple words, "Work out your own salvation with diligence"; the equally serene yet skeptical death of the Greek, passing from his judges with a doubt of the future life on his lips, although never for a moment doubting that virtue and justice are the fruit of inner knowledge, that they are their own reward, and the one thing to be sought after at any cost.

The Apology and Crito, which are here given complete, together with the closing scene of the Phaedo, form a little group apart from the other dialogues of Plato. Here for a while the philosopher lays aside his speculations and presents us with a simple and noble picture of the master's last days. These scenes have been translated many times, and like all works of great and baffling excellence will forever tempt new hands. The present translator will be satisfied if the inadequacy of his version shall tempt any readers to study in the original language these ever-memorable records of the wisest Athenian.

THE JUDGMENT OF SOCRATES.

THE APOLOGY.

[The apology, or as we should say now defence, of Socrates consists of three distinct parts, — the apology proper, his speech on the penalty to be imposed, and his farewell. He was tried before one of the regular courts composed of five hundred citizens who were chosen by lot, and whom we commonly call judges, though their function was rather that of a jury. The court was presided over by the Archon *basileus*, before whom cases of impiety regularly came. In criminal trials the state was not a party, but some citizen, usually one personally concerned, acted as plaintiff. In this case the plaintiff is a certain Meletus, a young man apparently of no special standing, who is assisted by the older and more influential Anytus and Lycon. There were no regular lawyers to plead in the Athenian courts, but plaintiff and defendant were obliged to speak for themselves.

Plato was present at the trial, but whether he reports the speech of Socrates with any accuracy, or substitutes a rhetorical exercise of his own, is a question of great interest but not easy to decide. Most critics believe that, while the words are Plato's, the Apology is in substance the actual speech of Socrates. Certainly we have here a noble and faithful picture of the master's life.]

I. How you have felt, O men of Athens, while my accusers were speaking, I cannot tell; as for myself, I almost forgot who I was, so persuasive were their words, although, if I may say it, not a single word they spoke was true. But of all their falsehoods this one amazed me most, that they should dare to bid you

be on your guard against me and not be deceived by my skilful pleading; for they must have known that their falsehood would be exposed the moment I opened my mouth and showed myself the owner of no such skill at all. Really this must have been mere wanton insolence on their part, unless indeed they call a man eloquent who simply speaks the truth. If that is their meaning, I might confess myself an orator — only not after the manner of these men, for in their words there was no truth at all, whereas in mine you shall hear the truth and the whole truth. Do not then expect from me, Athenians, an elaborate oration like theirs, decked out and daintily adorned with fine phrases — God forbid. You shall hear whatever language comes uppermost, for I trust that what I am going to say is right and just, and that is sufficient; let no one expect anything else. Neither would it be seemly at my time of life to come before you with cunningly prepared phrases like a young man. But this one thing above all I ask and beg of you, men of Athens: if you hear me defending myself with the same sort of words I have always used about the money-changers' tables in the market-place, where many of you have heard me talk, or anywhere else, do not be surprised at this and do not interrupt me. The simple fact is, this is the first time I have ever appeared in a law-court, although I am now seventy years old; and consequently I am a complete stranger to the language of the place. You would readily have patience with me if I were really a foreigner and spoke after the language and fashion of the land where I grew up; and now in the same way I may claim the privilege, I think, of asking you to overlook my manner of speech

Socrates artfully disclaims skill as a pleader;

his only art is the truth.

— it might be better and it might be worse — and to mark this and fix your minds on this question alone, whether what I say is justified by the facts or not. For this is the judge's office, as the orator's is to speak the truth.

II. In the first place, then, it behooves me, O men of Athens, to answer first the old lying charges against me and my earlier accusers, and after that these later ones. For I have had many accusers before you now these many years, whose slanders have gained strength with age, and whom I fear more than Anytus and his accomplices, although these, too, may well fill me with alarm. But those are the more dangerous who began to instil their slanders in your ears when you were children, and taught you that there is one Socrates, a philosopher, who speculates about the heavens above, and pries into the earth beneath, and makes the worse appear the better cause. These men, Athenians, who have scattered abroad rumors like this, are my serious accusers. Their hearers are only too quick to fancy that all speculators of the kind are natural atheists. Besides that, these accusers are many and their charges are of long standing: they began with you in childhood, or in youth, perhaps, when the mind is quick to believe; and the case went against me by default, there being none to answer. And strangest of all, it is impossible to know even their names and tell you who they are — unless it be perhaps some comic poet. And how shall I deal with those who have won your ears through sheer envy and malignity, and with those, too, who first honestly convinced themselves and then persuaded others? I cannot summon any one of them here

The present indictment is but a repetition of ancient slanders,

whose authors are unknown,

before you and confute him, but I must make my defence as a man fights with shadows, and question when there is none to answer. — Well, as I was saying, you are to understand that I have two sets of accusers, — those who have brought the present indictment against me, and others of older date whom I have just mentioned. You will understand also why I turn to these ancient accusers first, since you heard their charges first and much oftener, too, than the recent charges. Very well, gentlemen, you shall hear my apology. In this brief time allotted [1] me I must endeavor to overcome your long-standing prejudices. Gladly would I prosper in my attempt and come out well from my defence, if it were better for you and for me. The task is not easy, nay, I know too well how hard it is; yet be the issue as God wills, it is mine to obey the law and render my apology.

so that he must defend himself as a man fights with shadows.

III. Let us go back to the beginning and see from what accusation arose the calumnies which now embolden Meletus to bring forward his indictment. How have these backbiters been slandering me? Let us read their affidavit as if they accused me legally: "Socrates is an evil-doer and a busybody who investigates what is beneath the earth and above in the heavens, who makes the worse appear the better cause, and imparts these notions to others." — Such is the accusation; and you yourselves have seen in the comedy [2] of Aristophanes how one Socrates is exhibited

These slanderers charge him with teaching the false science of the sophists;

[1] Each speaker was allotted a certain time by the clepsydra, or water-clock, an instrument of the same general character as an hourglass of sand.

[2] Socrates was caricatured in this way, as a pernicious sophist, in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes.

swung about in a basket, declaring that he treads the air and uttering a deal of nonsense regarding things of which I have no knowledge at all. I do not mean to speak in contempt of such knowledge, if there be any one really wise in these matters — may no Meletus, I pray, bring such a charge against me — I merely say, Athenians, that I myself have nothing to do with them. Most of you who are present here will confirm me in this: many of you are familiar with my mode of talking, and I may call on you to testify for me to your neighbors; tell them now whether any one of you ever heard me say anything whatsoever, in few words or many, about these matters. From this you may assume that the other stories current about me are of the same fabrication.

but he denies any knowledge of this science,

and challenges any one to witness against him,

but no one speaks.

IV. And furthermore if you have heard any one assert that I undertake to give instruction and demand fees, this is equally false. Yet I am ready to admit such a course would be perfectly honorable if one were really able to give instruction, — like Gorgias of Leontini, for instance, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis, each of whom travels about from city to city and cunningly persuades the young men to leave their fellow townsmen whose instruction they might have quite freely and without price, and to follow after the new master at considerable cost and with gratitude besides. There is another of these philosophers, a Parian, who, I understand, is in the city at this moment. I heard of him from a man who has probably spent more money on these sophists than anybody else in the world, — I mean

Neither is he a teacher to demand fees,

though that were honorable if a man could really impart wisdom,

Callias, the son of Hipponicus. Happening to fall in with him one day, I began to question him about his two sons: "Callias," said I, "if your two boys were only foals or calves, we should know well enough where to hire a master who would train them so as to bring out their best qualities; some horse-breeder or farmer would serve our purpose. But now, seeing they are men, what master have you in mind for them? Do you know any one who has made a science of bringing out the qualities necessary to a man and a citizen? No doubt you have looked into the matter on account of these sons of yours. Is there any such master?" "To be sure there is," he replied. "Who," said I, "and whence does he hail, and what is his fee?" "Evenus, the Parian, my Socrates; and he charges five minae."[1] Happy Evenus, thought I to myself, if he in sooth possesses this art and teaches so reasonably. How I should plume myself, and how conceited I should be, if I had this wisdom. But alas, Athenians, I have it not.

like Evenus, the sophist.

V. Perhaps some one may retort: But, Socrates, what have you done then? Why have all these calumnies sprung up against you? For unless you had shown yourself a busybody in some way or other and had acted differently from other people, surely all this talk and rumor would never have got about. We do not wish to judge you unadvisedly; tell us the whole story. — Now this seems to me a fair request, and I will try to explain how I came by such an ill-omened name. Hear me out; I mean to tell the whole truth, though to some of you it will sound like a tale told in jest. The fact is, men of Athens, I got this name because of a sort of wisdom

Yet Socrates has a kind of wisdom,

[1] The mina was equivalent to about $18.

in me and for no other reason. What sort of wisdom, you ask? Well, it might be called strictly human wisdom, for really I may claim a share of that. These philosophers I mentioned just now possibly possess some wisdom of a higher sort, something superhuman — I hardly know how to name it, for I myself have no part in it, and who ever says I have lies and utters a slander. I beg you, Athenians, do not cry out if I appear to speak boastfully; the word I shall speak, however it sound, is not of me but of a greater, and he who uttered it is worthy of credence. Of this wisdom of mine, if so be I have any, and of its nature, I offer to you as witness the god who abides at Delphi. Chaerephon you certainly know. He was my friend from youth up; he was a friend of the people, too, following you in the recent exile[1] and returning with you. You know the man, how eager he was in all his ventures. Well, Chaerephon once took upon himself to go to Delphi and inquire of the oracle there — now I beseech you, Athenians, hear me quietly; he inquired of the oracle whether there was any one wiser than I, and the Pythian priestess declared there was none wiser. He himself is dead, but his brother is present to-day and will testify to these things.

though only human;

and to this Apollo has borne witness,

proclaiming him the wisest of men.

VI. Perhaps you may wonder why I relate this story: it is because I am going to show you how the calumnies rose against me. For when the oracle was brought to me, I began to ask myself, What does the god mean, and what is the reading of his riddle? Certainly so far as I know myself I am not conscious of being wise in any mat-

Being conscious of his ignorance

[1] In 404 B. C., when the oligarchy of the Thirty was in power.

ter great or small. What, then, does he mean by calling me the wisest? At any rate he does not lie, for that were contrary to his nature. — So for a long while I was in doubt about the oracle, until at length I bethought me of the following method of testing it. I went straight to one of our reputed wise men, thinking that here, if anywhere, I should be able to refute the oracle and say to the god, Look you! this man is wiser than I, and yet you call me wisest. Well, I examined this man (never mind his name, but my first adventure was with one of our politicians) and conversed with him, and it soon became apparent that to many people and most of all to himself he seemed quite wise, whereas in truth he was not so at all. Thereupon I undertook to show him how he was wise in opinion only and not in reality; but I only made myself a nuisance to him and to many of those about him. So I went away reflecting that at least I was wiser than this man. Neither of us apparently knows anything much worth while, but he in his ignorance thinks he knows, whereas I neither know nor think I know. Surely I may claim a little more of wisdom than he, in so far as I do not think I know what I do not know. After this I approached one whose character for wisdom was still higher, but with no different result; I only gained the ill will of him and a host of others.

he doubts the oracle;

but by testing other men he finds

his superior wisdom consists in knowing his own ignorance.

VII. So I went from one to another in succession, perceiving all the while that I was but making enemies, sorrowing and fearing, and yet compelled, as it were, to honor the god above all things and to prove his oracle by approaching all who were reputed to

have any knowledge. And I swear by the dog,[1] O men of Athens — for I must declare the truth — I swear that this was all my profit. Searching by command of the god, I found that those who had the greatest renown for wisdom were in general the most lacking of all, whereas others of no reputation were really the better and wiser men. But let me narrate my wanderings in detail and the labors I endured, like a second Heracles, to confirm the oracle to my own mind. After the politicians I went to the poets, tragic, dithyrambic, and what not, making sure that in comparison with these I should detect myself in the very act of folly. I took their own poems which they had apparently elaborated with the greatest care, and with these in my hand proceeded to ask the authors what they signified, expecting, of course, to pick up some curious information at the same time. I am ashamed to tell you the truth, my friends, and yet it must out. Will you believe me, almost any one here in this court would speak more intelligently about these works than the authors themselves. I very soon learned of the poets that they compose not by wisdom but by a certain inspiration and gift of nature, like diviners and soothsayers, who in the same way utter many noble sentiments, yet understand nothing of what they say. Such appeared to be the state of the poets; yet I perceived that deluded by their poetic genius they deemed themselves the wisest of men in other

Like a second Heracles he undergoes labors

in search of one truly wise.

He examines the poets;

but their inspiration does not save them

from presumptuous folly in other matters.

[1] Socrates' favorite oath. Tradition says that Rhadamanthys forbade swearing by the gods, but permitted such a use of the names of animals.

matters also, wherein they were nothing. So I gave up the poets too, thinking I surpassed them in the same way as the politicians.

VIII. Finally I went to the artisans. Here at least I had no knowledge at all, and I was sure to find these men skilled in many noble crafts. And in this I was not deceived; they knew what I did not know and in so far were wiser than I. Nevertheless these excellent artisans, as I discovered, had the same weakness as the poets: because they wrought well in their own craft, every one of them deemed himself most wise in other weighty matters; and this error went far to obscure their real wisdom. Come, then, I said to myself, in behalf of the oracle, will you be content with your present lot, being neither wise in the wisdom of these men nor foolish in their folly, or would you choose their dubious state? And immediately I answered to myself and to the oracle that it was better for me as I am.

The skilled artisans are no better off;

and Socrates is content with his own measure of wisdom and folly.

IX. From this investigation, O men of Athens, many enmities sprang up against me, such as are grievous and dangerous, and such as gave birth to a host of slanders; from thence, too, arose the name I had of being wise. Those who are present always take it for granted that I myself am wise in those things wherein I expose the ignorance of others. But the truth would seem to be, O Athenians, that God alone is really wise, and this he sets forth in the oracle, signifying that human wisdom is worth little or nothing at all. Neither doth he care aught for Socrates, but merely employed my name, using me as an illustration, as if to say: Hear, all ye

By exposing others he acquires an invidious reputation for wisdom;

but in truth God alone is really wise,

men! he is wisest among you who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is of nothing worth. — And I even to this day go about seeking as the god wills, and am ever on the scent, if perchance any citizen or stranger may appear to me truly wise. And when he proves other than wise, then, in vindication of the god, I expose the man's ignorance. And by reason of this task laid upon me I have no leisure for the important affairs of state and home, but live always in utter poverty as a servant of the god.

and this was the meaning of the oracle.

X. In addition to this, many young men from our wealthy families, who have nothing else to do, flock after me unbidden and take delight in hearing my cross-questionings. Indeed, they often imitate me, trying their wit at refuting others; and I dare say they find plenty of men ready at hand who pretend to know, but really know little or nothing at all. Straightway these pretenders, on being exposed, fall into a rage against me, instead of blaming themselves, and call down curses on this Socrates who is corrupting our young men. And when they are asked what this Socrates does and teaches, they are at a loss, having nothing to say; and so they try to cover up their confusion by repeating the old trumpery charges against the whole body of philosophers about things in heaven and beneath the earth, you know, and atheism, and making the worse appear the better cause. They are not likely to confess the truth, that they have been detected in assuming knowledge which they never had. These men are self-important and revengeful and numerous, and so, I think, with their loud and overbear-

The young men imitate him,

and those exposed by them

accuse Socrates of corrupting the youth

by teaching false science;

ing words they have dinned these ancient and bitter slanders into your ears. No doubt this is why Meletus and Anytus and Lycon have set upon me, — Meletus having a grudge against me on the part of the poets, Anytus of the artisans, and Lycon of the orators. It would be a wonder, then, as I remarked at the beginning, if in the brief time allotted me I should be able to root out of your minds this calumny now grown so huge. This is the very truth, O men of Athens, and I speak before you, nothing concealing, whether great or small, nothing dissimulating. Yet I know well enough that I but increase the hatred towards me by my frankness; and this is a proof, if need be, that my words are true, and a witness to the slander of my life and the causes thereof. Examine the matter now or later at your leisure; you will find it thus.

and hence Meletus is encouraged to make his indictment.

XI. And now sufficient has been said in regard to those earlier enemies and their charges; I will proceed in my defence against Meletus — that worthy patriot as he calls himself — and my recent accusers. Let us treat them as new plaintiffs and read their affidavit anew. So it runs: Socrates is an evil-doer and corrupter of the youth, who denies the gods of the city, and introduces strange daemonic[1] powers of his own. Such is the accusation; let us examine it point by point. It asserts that I am an evil-doer and corrupter of the youth; but I, O Athenians, assert that this Meletus is an evil-doer; for see how he jests in so serious an affair, thoughtlessly dragging men into court, and affecting to be serious and solicitous

He passes to these present accusers,

who charge him with corrupting the youth and spreading atheism.

[1] For the meaning of the words *daemon* and *daemonic*, see Introduction, page 13.

about matters for which he never cared a whit. No, I am not misrepresenting him, as you shall see for yourselves.

XII. Now, Meletus, speak up and answer me. Of course you are highly concerned that our young men shall turn out for the best?

He claims his privilege of cross-questioning the plaintiff,

I am.

Very good; now inform these gentlemen who it is improves them. You must certainly know, since you make this your business. Having tracked down their corrupter, as you say, you summon me hither and lodge a complaint. Now, then, speak out and declare to the court who it is improves them. What, Meletus, you are silent and have nothing to say? Yet is n't your silence a little disgraceful now, and even a good proof of my taunt that you do not care a straw for these things? Nay, tell us, my good Sir, who it is improves them.

The laws.

I did n't ask about them, my dear Sir; but first of all, who is the man that knows the laws?

The men before you, Socrates, the judges.

What 's this you say, Meletus? Are these men capable of instructing and improving the youth?

and elicits the monstrous statement

So I said.

Do you mean all of them, or only part?

All of them.

Well said, by the goddess Hera, and a mighty abundance of helpers for our youth! And what follows? Do the gentlemen of the audience yonder improve them?

They do.

And the senators,[1] too?

[1] The senate was composed of five hundred members; its

Yes, and the senators.

Well, then, Meletus, perhaps those who sit in the great assembly corrupt the youth; or do all of these, too, improve them?

Yes, these, too.

Why, then, it should seem that all the Athenians train our young men to be good and honorable — except me; I alone spread corruption. Is this your meaning?

that Socrates alone of all Athens corrupts the youth.

It is precisely what I mean.

Alas, you lay a great evil at my door. But tell me: in the case of horses, is it your opinion that all the world can improve them, while only one man injures? On the contrary, is n't it true that one particular man, or perhaps some few men, horse-men by profession, improve them, whereas most people who meddle with horses really spoil them? Is n't this the case, Meletus, with horses and all kinds of creatures? Indeed it is, no matter whether you and Anytus say yes or no. And it would be a great and strange blessing for our youth if only one man spread corruption and all the rest of the world helped them. Really, Meletus, you prove sufficiently well that our young men have never given you a care; and you set forth your own heedlessness in bringing me to court for matters that concern you not at all.

XIII. But I am not done with you, Meletus. Tell me whether it is better to live amidst good or wicked citizens. Answer, I say, for the question is quite simple. Do not wicked citizens do ill to their neighbors, and good citizens good?

By a play on the word evil as meaning both wickedness and harm,

function was judicial and executive as well as legislative. There was also an *Ekklesia*, or assembly of all free citizens.

Yes, they do.

Would anybody in the world wish to be harmed by his fellow men rather than benefited? Answer, my friend; indeed, the law requires you to answer. Would anybody wish to be harmed?

he confounds Meletus.

Of course not.

Well, then, do you summon me hither because I corrupt the youth and make them wicked intentionally or against my will?

Intentionally, I say.

How is this, Meletus? Are you as a young man so much wiser than I in my old age? Have you learned that the evil always do ill to those about them, and the good, good, whereas I am so far gone in folly as not to know that if I make any one of my fellows a rascal I am likely to receive harm from him? Am I so foolish as to commit this great wrong intentionally, as you say? I cannot accept your statement, Meletus; nor will any one else, I think. Either I do not corrupt the youth, or, if I do, it is unwittingly; and in either case you are proved a liar. If I corrupt them unwittingly, then for such unintentional errors you have no authority in law to prosecute me here; but rather taking me apart you should instruct and admonish me, for certainly I would turn from unwitting wrong were I shown my error. Yet you have always avoided me, never once trying to enlighten my ignorance, and now you prosecute me before this court where those are properly indicted who require punishment and not enlightenment.

Behind the sophism is the real argument showing the absurdity of such a sweeping charge of intentional corruption.

XIV. It is now perfectly clear, Athenians, that

Meletus, as I said before, has never troubled himself in the least about any of these matters. Yet, tell me, Meletus, how is it you say I corrupt the youth. Evidently, according to your written indictment, by denying the gods of the city and introducing strange daemonic powers of my own. Do you mean that I corrupt them by spreading such doctrines as this?

He proceeds to the second head of the accusation,

So I assert, and boldly.

I conjure you, Meletus, by these very gods who are now in question, make your charge a little more explicit to me and to the court. I do not quite understand. Do you mean that I teach the belief in certain gods, and myself believe that such exist, not being altogether an atheist and evil-doer in this respect, but that my gods are not those of the city? Is that your charge? Or do you claim that I utterly deny the gods and spread abroad this doctrine of atheism?

I claim that you absolutely deny the existence of the gods.

and narrows it down to a charge of absolute atheism,

Extraordinary! Why do you say that, Meletus? Do not I, like other men, believe the sun and the moon to be gods?

Hear him, judges! Does he not call the sun a stone and the moon earth?

Why, my dear Meletus, you must think you are accusing Anaxagoras.[1] Do you so despise these

[1] Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, an immediate precursor and possibly teacher of Socrates. He dwelt at Athens for a number of years until expelled by the people on a charge of impiety. His remark on leaving Athens is famous: "It is not I who have lost the Athenians, but the Athenians who have lost me." He is said to have declared the sun to be a molten mass, and the moon inhabitable with hills and valleys. His most characteristic doctrine was the introduction of *mind* into the world as

gentlemen, and deem them so illiterate as not to know that the works of Anaxagoras the Clazomenian are full of such notions? And of course the young men come to me to learn these doctrines, when they have plenty of opportunities of hearing them in the theatre for a drachma at most, and so turning the laugh on poor Socrates if he palms them off as his own, — such outlandish doctrines, too. But, in heaven's name, do you really think me such an atheist?

A complete and utter atheist.

Incredible, Meletus; you are lying and you know it. — O Athenians, the man is utterly insolent and wanton; he has made this indictment in the merest insolence and wantonness and youthful bravado. He seems to have patched together a kind of riddle to try our wits, as if to say, Will the wise Socrates detect my jesting and self-contradictions, or shall I hoodwink him and the whole court? So far as I can make out, he has contradicted himself flatly in his own indictment, which as much as says, Socrates is an evil-doer who does not believe in the gods, yet believes in the gods. — It is the trick of a jester.

a charge so monstrous that Meletus must be merely jesting.

XV. And now let us see why I have such an opinion of him. Do you, Meletus, answer my questions; and do you, gentlemen, as I requested at the beginning, remember not to interrupt me if I talk along in my usual manner. — Is there, Meletus, in all the world a man who recognizes human works, but denies that there are men? — The court sees that he won't answer, but tries to make a distraction. — Does

the governing principle. His philosophy was caricatured on the stage by Aristophanes and other comic poets, and formed part of the mental baggage of Euripides.

any one believe there is horsemanship, but no horses? or flute-playing, but no flute-players? Of course not, my honest friend; so much I may affirm to you and to the others here, since you are unready to reply. But at least answer me this: Does any one deny there are daemons, who yet acknowledges their power?

No one.

How delighted I am that at last, compelled by the court, you deign to answer. So, then, as you say, I do believe and teach there are daemonic powers; whether old or new ones of my own invention, no matter, for according to your words I do believe in these powers, and this you have sworn to in your affidavit.

For the indictment accuses Socrates of introducing new daemonic powers,

But if I believe in daemonic powers, I must needs believe in daemons, must I not? Of course. You see I take your silence for tacit agreement. And do we not regard the daemons as gods or children of the gods? Answer me, yes or no.

which must will either be either gods or the offspring of the gods,

Yes.

Since, then, I acknowledge there are daemons, what riddling and jesting is this of yours? For in the one case if the daemons are nothing more than gods, and I believe in these daemons, why, then, with one breath you declare that I do and do not believe in the gods. But if on the other hand these daemons are the illegitimate children of the gods by the nymphs or other mothers, as the stories go, then who in the world would say there are children of the gods, but no gods? Absurd; you might as well say there are mules from horses and asses, and deny the existence of horses and asses. The gist of it all is just this, Meletus: you have brought this indictment against me either to test my wits, or else

because you wished to accuse me and could find no real wrong to attack. But there is no art by which you will ever persuade any one not utterly devoid of reason that the same person can believe in daemonic and divine agencies and at the same time believe neither in daemons nor gods nor half-gods — that is quite impossible.

and in either case the charge of atheism is self-contradicted.

XVI. In truth, men of Athens, there is no need of many words to free myself from the charge of Meletus; and sufficient has been said. But as I was saying, and as you yourselves know, there are many enemies and a deal of hatred arrayed against me. It is this will condemn me, if I am cast; not Meletus or Anytus, but the envious detraction of the multitude which has condemned many an honest man before me and will do the same hereafter — there is no danger it will stop with me.

He is done with Meletus.

Possibly some one will say here: But are you not ashamed, Socrates, to have lived such a life that now you stand in peril of death? I might fairly reply to such an one: You are far from the mark, my friend, if you suppose that a man of any worth in the world ought to reckon on the chances of life and death. Not so; when he acts he has only this one thing to consider, — whether he acts righteously or unrighteously, and whether as a good or a bad man. Poor creatures indeed your notion would make of the heroes who fell at Troy, and among them Thetis' son, Achilles, who so despised danger, in comparison with dishonor, that he heeded not the warning words of his mother, though she was a goddess. For so I can imagine her pleading with him in his deadly wrath against Hector, and saying: "O my

To the general question how he has come into this peril of death, he replies,

that a man should take no account of life or death,

child, if you avenge the death of your comrade Patroclus and slay Hector, you, too, must die;

'Ready thy fate stands against thee after that Hector hath fallen.'"

Still when he heard this, he accounted death and peril as but a little thing, fearing far more to live a coward and leave his friends unavenged. "Let me perish straightway," he said, "and be avenged of mine enemy, that I abide not here by the beakèd ships, a laughing-stock and a burden of the earth." — Think you, this man cared for death and peril? Nay, Athenians, the truth is quite otherwise; for wherever a man takes his post, deeming it best for him there, or wherever the leader places him, there let him abide, say I, awaiting danger, taking account of naught, be it death or any other thing, except only dishonor.

but like Achilles consider only honor.

XVII. Strange indeed would my conduct be, men of Athens, if I, who have stood like many another man at my post and faced death, when the generals chosen by you to command gave me my orders, — strange indeed if, now when the god, as I firmly believe and am convinced, bids me stand forth as one devoted to wisdom, a questioner of myself and all the world, I were to desert my post through fear of death or any other thing. That would be strange indeed, I repeat, and justly then might a man charge me in court with denying the gods if I disobeyed the oracle, and feared death, and in my folly deemed myself wise. For the fear of death, my friends, is only another form of appearing wise when we are foolish and of seeming to know what we know not. No mor-

Socrates has faced death in battle for the state

and will not blench now.

tal knoweth of death whether it be not the greatest of all good things to man, yet do men fear it as if knowing it to be the greatest of evils. And is not this that most culpable ignorance which pretends to know what it knows not? It may be, my friends, that in this I am different from the world; and certainly if I should claim to be wiser than another in any one thing, it would be herein, that having no certain knowledge of the life beyond, I pretend to none. Yet this knowledge I have, and this I know, that it is an evil and shameful thing to do wrong and to disobey our superior, whether human or divine. Never, then, will I shrink and flee from what may be an unknown blessing rather than from evil known to be such. And therefore if now you should release me and pay no heed to Anytus, who declares that the trial should never have been admitted at all unless I am to be punished with death, for otherwise all your sons will follow in my steps and be utterly corrupted, — if notwithstanding this you should say to me: Socrates, this time we will let you off in spite of Anytus, but on one condition, that you give up this investigation of yours and this pursuit of wisdom, under penalty of death should you be caught at it again, — if, I repeat, you were to release me on these terms, then I should say to you: O men of Athens, I do indeed salute you and wish you all happiness, but I obey God rather than you, and while there is breath to me and so far as my strength permits, I will not cease from this pursuit of wisdom, neither will I desist from admonishing you. And whomsoever of

Death may indeed be a blessing.

True wisdom confesses its ignorance of the life beyond,

but knows that sin and disobedience are the real evil.

No threats of death will cause him to abandon his divine mission,

for God himself bids him warn men

you I meet, with him I will argue as my wont is and say to him: My good friend, you who belong to Athens, this city great and glorious for wisdom and power, are you not ashamed that your life is given up to the winning of much money and reputation and rank, while for wisdom and truth and the good of your own soul you care not and have no concern? And if he disputes and asserts his care for these things, I will not quickly let him go or leave him, but will question and examine him and put him to the proof; and if then he seems to claim a virtue which he does not possess, I will rebuke him because the things of most worth he little esteems, but prizes what is valueless. In this way I shall act toward young and old, whomever I meet, whether stranger or citizen, and especially toward citizens, as they are closer akin to me. For this, I assure you, is the command of the god; and I think no greater blessing has ever befallen you in the city than this my service to the god. For I do nothing else but go about persuading you, young and old, not to take thought first for your bodies and for money, but more diligently to consider the welfare of your own souls; and I say to you always that not from money proceedeth virtue, but from virtue proceed money and all good things that men cherish in public and in private. If by teaching this doctrine I corrupt the youth, the mischief is great; but if any one asserts that my teaching is other than this, his words are naught. Therefore I say to you, Athenians, yield to Anytus or yield not, acquit me or acquit me not, — never will I alter my ways, though I suffer death many times.

to seek first the welfare of their own souls.

XVIII. Do not cry out, Athenians; but remember

how I besought you to remain quiet and listen, no matter what I said. Indeed, I think you will profit by hearing. Now I am going to say something else at which perhaps you will raise a shout — yet I beg you do not. Be assured, then, that if I am such an one as I said and you put me to death, you will be doing yourselves greater harm than me. Neither Meletus nor Anytus can injure me a whit; there is no power in them to do that; for it is not decreed above that the better man can be injured by the worse. He may inflict death, perhaps, or exile, or civil dishonor; and possibly Meletus and his guild reckon these things to be great calamities; but I for my part deem it a far greater calamity to plot unrighteously against a man's life as Meletus is now doing. And therefore, men of Athens, I am not concerned to plead for myself, as one might expect of me, but am rather pleading for you, lest by condemning me in your ignorance you throw away God's gift to you. For if you kill me, you will not speedily find another like me, sent, as it were, by the hand of God upon the city. You will laugh at my words, but really this people resembles a huge horse, thoroughbred, but sluggish from his very size and needing a gadfly to excite him. So the god seems to have set me upon the city as a gadfly, and without respite I am fastening on you the livelong day, and exciting and urging and reproaching every one I meet. Such another man is not so readily found, my friends; you had better take my advice and spare me. Now, like a man disturbed in his sleep, you may of course fall into a rage and crush me with a blow, as you would a fly — and so you will please Anytus. After

He is not concerned for himself but for the city,

lest they disregard the warning of God

that you may quietly slumber away the rest of your lives, unless God in his mercy sends some other upon you. That I am really such an one given to the city by God, you may understand from my life; for it is not from merely human reasons that I neglect my own affairs and see them going to waste these many years, while unweariedly I look to your interests and come to you all individually, as if I were a father or an elder brother, with my message and persuasion of virtue. If I reaped any profit from this life or took pay for my exhortations, it would be a simple matter. My accusers have shamelessly brought forward every other possible charge against me; and yet, as you yourselves see, they have not dared to assert, under the testimony of witnesses, that I ever exacted a fee or asked any man for such. I think, indeed, my poverty is sufficient evidence to the contrary.

and sink into sinful sloth.

Such a vox clamantis is he,

and in this mission he neglects all worldly affairs.

XIX. It may perhaps seem inconsistent that I go about so busily giving my advice in private, but never venture to come up with you to the assembly and speak out before the whole city. I have a reason for this, as you have often heard me explain and in many places; for there is a certain divine or daemonic witness abides with me, and it is this that Meletus has caricatured in the indictment. From childhood it has been with me, as it were a voice speaking at intervals, always warning me against something I had in hand to do, but never urging me to act. This it is has restrained me from a public life. And wisely has it hindered me; for doubtless, Athenians, if I had busied myself with public affairs, my death would

Warned by an inner sign

he has refrained from politics,

have fallen long before now, and I should have profited neither you nor myself. Do not chafe at hearing the truth. No man will save his own life who boldly opposes you or any other people and checks the wicked and lawless proceedings in his city. He who would preserve his life for a little while to fight the brave fight of justice must seek his ends in private and not in public.

for in evil times a man cannot oppose the people and save his own life

to fight the great fight.

XX. I can offer you convincing evidence of these things, — not in words, but in what you appreciate, deeds. Hear what actually befell me, and you will see that I am not one to yield the right to any man through fear of death, but would rather die unyielding. My story may sound vulgar and commonplace, but it is at least true. You know I have never held any public office in the city except to sit in the senate. Now it happened that the tribe Antiochis, to which I belong, held the presidency[1] at the time of the battle of Arginusae when the ten generals were charged with neglecting the bodies of the lost. You remember you wished to try them in a body, quite contrary to law, as you yourselves afterwards acknowledged. At that time I alone of the presidents held out and voted

To prove that he has not avoided public affairs from cowardice,

[1] The senate was composed of fifty members from each of the ten tribes, each tribe in rotation holding the presidency, or prytaneia, for thirty-five or thirty-six days. The prytanes were invested with certain executive powers, the chief prytanis of the day, among other things, presiding at the assembly of the people. — After the naval victory of Arginusae, 407 B. C., the generals failed to recover the bodies of the dead and drowning, their excuse being a violent storm. Contrary to law and custom, they were tried in a body, instead of individually, before the people, and condemned to death.

against this illegal proceeding. The demagogues were ready to arrest and impeach me; you were urging them on and shouting out against me; nevertheless I thought it behooved me to take this hazard with law and justice on my side, rather than stand with you against justice through fear of bonds or death. This happened while the people were still in power; but during the Oligarchy the thirty tyrants[1] once summoned me, with four others, to the city hall, and bade us fetch over Leon of Salamis from that island to be executed. Such commands, you know, they were constantly giving in order to implicate as many as possible in their crimes. Then again I proved, not by words but by deeds, that I cared not a straw for death, if I may speak so boldly, but was anxious above all else in the world to shun injustice and impiety. Not even that strong and oppressive tyranny could terrify me into abetting injustice. When we came from the hall the other four went to Salamis and brought back Leon, but I went quietly home. Probably it would have cost me my life, had not the government of the Thirty fallen shortly afterwards. — This is my story and there are many to bear witness to its truth.

he relates his resistance to the enraged people,

and again to the Thirty.

XXI. Now do you suppose I could have lived through all these years if I had gone into public affairs, and like an honest man had made it my first

[1] After the fall of Athens, in 404 B. C., the government passed into the hands of a committee of thirty under the connivance of Lysander, the Spartan general. Critias, the chief of these tyrants, was an uncle of Plato's and had been a follower of Socrates. The next year Thrasybulus put an end to this reign of terror, and restored the democracy.

duty always to support the right? Far from it, O Athenians; neither I nor any other could have done it. Examine my whole life and it will appear that such has been my conduct wherever I have touched on public affairs. And in private I am the same, for never once have I yielded to any man in a question of right and wrong, no, not even to one of those who by these slanderers are called my disciples. I am no master to have disciples. If any one, young or old, ever cares to listen to me while I talk and go about my business, I do not repulse him; neither do I discourse for money, but to rich and poor alike I offer myself; anybody may start the question, and, if ready to answer my queries, may hear whatever I have to say. And I am in no wise accountable if those who listen to me turn out good or bad, for to none of them have I ever promised or given any kind of instruction. Should any one claim to have heard or learned from me in private what all the world has not heard, the man simply lies.

He has never yielded to wrong through fear,

and denies responsibility for the evil deeds of Critias and others called his disciples.

XXII. Do you ask why certain persons take pleasure in my company year after year? That has already been explained to you, Athenians. I told you the whole truth when I said their pleasure was in hearing our pretenders to wisdom detected in folly. There is a certain satisfaction in this; but as for me, my course was pointed out by God himself, whose admonitions came to me in oracles and dreams and signs, in whatsoever way the divine will is at times made manifest to men to guide their actions. My statement, Athenians, is true and easily proved. For if aforetime I corrupted the youth

He explains why the young men flock to him,

and do still corrupt them, then some of those who have now grown old enough to recognize the evil counsel given them in their youth ought to come forward and avenge themselves by denouncing me. And if they themselves hesitate to do this, then their relatives, their fathers or brothers or others of their kin, ought to bear in mind the dishonor of their family and seek vengeance. A number of these men I see present to-day: yonder is Crito, who is of the same age and deme[1] with me; and there is his son Critobulus; then I see Lysanias of Sphettus, the father of Aeschines yonder; there is Antiphon of Cephisus, the father of Epigenes. Others I see whose brothers have been much about me: Nicostratus, the son of Theozotides, who might speak for his brother Theodotus, now dead and no longer able to command his silence; and Paralus yonder, the son of Demodocus, whose brother was Theages; here is Adeimantus, the son of Ariston, whose brother Plato is also present; and Aeantodorus, whose brother Apollodorus I likewise see. I might point out a number of others, among whom Meletus ought certainly to have found some one to produce as a witness during his speech. Perhaps he forgot while speaking: let him bring forward his witnesses now — I yield the floor — let him say if he has any such testimony. No, Athenians, you will find, on the contrary, they are all ready to witness for me, for me the corrupter and destroyer of their families, if you are to believe Meletus and Anytus. No doubt those whom I actually corrupted may have their grounds

and shows that without exception

they approve in their old age of his influence.

[1] When, in 510 B. C., the constitution was remodeled by Cleisthenes, the population was divided for political purposes into ten tribes, and each tribe into ten demes.

for supporting me; but the uncorrupted, these older men, their relatives, what other reason can they have for abetting me but the plain and straightforward reason of justice? They know, forsooth, that Meletus lies and that I speak the truth.

XXIII. Well, gentlemen, this and the like of this is about all I have to offer as an apology. Yet there may be some one among you who will be indignant when he recalls his own conduct on such an occasion. He may have had less at stake than I, yet with many tears he implored and supplicated the judges, dragging his little children before the court and a swarm of friends and relatives to awaken pity; whereas I will do nothing of the sort, although my danger, it might seem, is the extremest of all. Such an one, observing my conduct, may harden himself against me and suffer anger to influence his vote. If any one is so disposed — but that is hardly possible — still if there be any such, I might fittingly say to him: My dear friend, I, too, have my family ties; I, too, as Homer says, was born of human parents, and not of a stock or a stone; I have my own kith and kin, and even children, three sons, Athenians, one a grown boy and the other two quite young. But I will drag none of these hither and so beseech you to release me. You ask my reasons for refusing? Not out of wilfulness, gentlemen, or because I contemn you; and whether I hold death lightly or not is another question. The point is that out of regard for myself and for you and for the whole city I deem it degrading to stoop to any such means. For I am now an old man and have, whether rightly or wrongly, acquired a certain name, — yes, the saying has gone abroad that Socrates is different

He refuses to beg for acquittal:

from the rest of the world. It is a shameful thing, if those among you who are held superior for wisdom or courage or some other virtue are willing to act in this way. Indeed, I have more than once seen men of reputation behave in the strangest fashion when on trial; one might suppose they looked on death as a monstrous ill, just as though they were to be immortal if once they escaped your hands. Such men, I say, are an opprobrium to the city; they leave any foreigner to remark of us, that the best of Athenians in virtue, the men chosen by the Athenians for place and honor, are in reality no better than women. O men of Athens, we who have a name among you ought not to behave thus, nor, if we would, ought you to allow it. You ought clearly to show that condemnation inevitably falls, not on the man who keeps his peace, but on those who go through these piteous farces and render the city ridiculous.

other men may drag their children into court and sue for mercy,

but he will not so humble himself or disgrace the city.

XXIV. And apart from appearances, O Athenians, it does not seem right to appeal to the sympathy of the judges and escape by such means, but rather to inform and convince them. The judge does not sit here to grant justice as a favor, but to decide the truth; he is under oath to give judgment in accordance with the laws and to show partiality to none. Is it your wish that we encourage perjury amongst you? and how, then, shall you and we escape the evil of impiety? Do not therefore require of me, Athenians, to demean myself before you in a manner that I consider neither honorable nor right in the eyes of God and men, and especially now when I am charged by Meletus

The judge should grant justice and not bestow favors.

here with the very crime of impiety. For clearly were I to persuade you and force you by my supplications to forswear yourselves, clearly, then, I should be teaching you to disbelieve in the gods; and in the very act of my apology I should be accusing myself of atheism. But such disbelief is far from my thoughts, Athenians; I do believe, though my belief is beyond the understanding of my accusers. And now I commit myself to you and to God, to judge as it shall be best for me and for you.

Finally he solemnly declares his belief in the gods.

[*Socrates is condemned by a majority of 281 to 220. — He now discusses the penalty to be inflicted. According to the custom of the Athenian courts, prosecutor and defendant each proposed a penalty, and it was left to the judges to decide between these two. Meletus has proposed the death-penalty.*]

XXV. There are many reasons, O men of Athens, why I am not troubled that the verdict has gone against me. Indeed, the result was fully anticipated, and I am only surprised at the evenness of the vote. I thought to be condemned by a large majority, and now it appears that only thirty votes were needed to acquit me. So far as Meletus is concerned, I have, I think, escaped, and more than escaped; for it must be apparent to all that if Anytus and Lycon had not taken part in the accusation he would have fallen below one fifth of the votes and so forfeited the thousand drachmas.[1]

Socrates is not troubled at his conviction;

he has at least practically defeated Meletus.

XXVI. The man has proposed death as the penalty. Very good; and what counter-penalty shall I propose? Evidently what I deserve. And what is

[1] Any prosecutor in a criminal suit who failed to get one fifth of the votes was subject to this fine.

that? what do I deserve to suffer or pay? Look at me: never in all my life have I learned to be idle; for a higher end I have neglected all that the world most covets, — wealth, property, military command, public leadership, office, the influence of party and faction in the state, — deeming myself too honest a man to indulge in these pursuits and save my own life. Neither did I see any profit in these things to you or to myself, and therefore I passed them by and took up a new pursuit. Going to each of you in private, I conferred on him what I call the highest benefit in the world, by persuading him to think first of the good of his own real self and afterwards of his worldly affairs; to think first of the good of the city itself and afterwards of her interests, and so in all things. You see what man I am; what should be done to me? Some good thing, Athenians, if I am to propose what I really deserve, — and some good thing that shall be suited to me. What, then, is suited to a poor man, your benefactor, who only demands leisure to go on admonishing you? There is no other reward so appropriate as a seat at the tables in the Prytaneum.[1] This he deserves more than any of your victors with horse or chariot at the Olympic games; for these champions give you but the name of fortunate, whereas I render you such in reality. Moreover they need no support, and I do. Therefore if I must propose the proper and just reward, my proposition is a seat at the tables in the Prytaneum.

Meletus has proposed the death-penalty;

Socrates, considering his needs and his services to the state,

proudly claims the highest reward in the power of the city.

XXVII. Possibly I may seem to you now to be

[1] Where certain officials, guests of the state, victors at the games, and others ate at the public expense.

speaking with the same arrogance as before in the matter of tears and supplications. That is not the case; rather I am persuaded that never once have I willingly wronged a human being, however I fail to convince you of the fact. A little while only we have talked here with one another; and I think you, too, might be convinced if your custom permitted us to discuss the sentence of death, not for one day only, but for several days, as other states do. Now it is not easy in this brief time to root out deep-seated prejudices. Being persuaded, then, that I have never wronged any man, I am not likely now to wrong myself, or say of myself that I deserve any evil, or pronounce any such sentence upon myself. And why should I? Through fear of the penalty proposed by Meletus? But as I have already stated, I do not know whether death is really a blessing or an evil. And instead of this shall I name some penalty which I know to be an evil? imprisonment, for example? Why should I pass my life in prison, the slave of each succeeding officer? Shall I propose a fine, with imprisonment until the sum is paid? But in my case that would be confinement for life, as I have no money to pay withal. Or exile, perhaps? It is quite probable you would agree to that. But what a poor spirit mine would be, what blindness of heart, if I supposed that any other people would put up with me when you, my fellow citizens, find my continual discoursing and arguing so intolerably odious that you must needs get rid of me. My blindness is not so great, Athenians. It would be a noble life for me in my old age to go forth an exile and be bandied about from city to city. Well I know that wherever I went

Or, if some penalty must be inflicted,

he prefers death to imprisonment or exile,

the young men would flock to hear my words just as they do here. If I drove them away, they themselves would call upon the elders to banish me; and if I suffered them to follow me, then in fear for them their fathers and kinsmen would banish me.

for obedience to the divine command and the pursuit of wisdom

XXVIII. Does any one ask, Why can't you withdraw somewhere, Socrates, and live in silence and peace? It seems strangely difficult to enlighten you on this point. If I say I cannot hold my peace because this would be to disobey the god, you will take my words in jest. If on the other hand I say that the one good thing in all the world for a man is to pass his days in converse about virtue and these other matters whereof I am continually talking and questioning myself and others, and that a life unquestioned is no life at all for a man, — if I say this, you will believe me even less. Nevertheless I speak truly, though you are slow to believe. And further I am not accustomed to think of myself as deserving punishment. Had I money, I should propose a fine, the greatest I could pay, and account it no evil. But this cannot be, unless you accept a sum within my scant means. For example, I might perhaps pay a silver mina; and this fine I will propose. Plato here, O Athenians, and Crito and Critobulus and Apollodorus bid me name thirty minae, and offer themselves as security. This sum, therefore, I finally propose, and these men will be sufficient security to you for the payment.

alone make life worth while.

As a compromise he proposes a fine,

for which his friends will stand security.

[*He is condemned to death.*]

XXIX. You have gained but a little, Athenians, and at how great a cost! From those who are prompt

to revile our city you will receive the name and opprobrium of killing Socrates, a man of wisdom, — for in their eagerness to blame you they will call me wise whether I am so or not. Could you have waited but a little while, the event would have come of itself. My age is not hidden; you see that I am far on in life and near to death. I am not speaking now to all, but to those of you who voted my death. And to them I say further: You suppose, gentlemen, that I have lost through lack of words to convince you, even provided I had stooped to say and do anything to escape. Not so. I am cast, not through lack of words, but through lack of impudence and shamelessness, and because I would not speak what you are most pleased to hear, nor weep and wail, nor do and say a thousand other degrading things which others have taught you to expect. At the time it did not seem worth while to demean myself as a slave through fear; neither do I now repent of my manner of defence. I choose to defend myself thus and die, rather than as you would have me and live. Neither in war nor in a lawsuit ought a man, neither I nor any other, to accept every means of avoiding death. In battle, for instance, a man often sees that he may save his life by throwing away his arms and falling in supplication before his pursuers; and so in all times of peril there are ways of escape if one will submit to any baseness. Nay, Athenians, it is not so hard to shun death, but hard indeed to shun evil, for it runs more swiftly than death. I, you see, an old man and slow of gait, have been overtaken by the slower runner; whereas my accusers, who are

His condemnation is but a little time gained, for death would soon have come of itself,

and the city must bear the shame of it.

It is better to die by an unjust sentence

young and nimble, are caught by the swifter runner, which is wickedness. And now I go away condemned by you to death, but they depart hence condemned by truth herself to injustice and sin. I abide by my award, and they by theirs. Some fate, it may be, has meted out the awards, and I at least am content.

than to suffer within the pangs of outraged truth.

XXX. And now a word of prophecy for those who condemned me; for I stand at the threshold of death, when, if ever, men speak with prophetic insight. So I say to you who have slain me that straightway after my death a punishment shall come upon you far more terrible, God knows, than your slaying me. You have committed this crime, thinking to shake off the burden of accounting for your lives; but the result, I tell you now, will be quite the contrary. There are many who will call you to account, —men whom I have restrained and whom you have never suspected; younger men who will attack you more savagely and cause you still greater annoyance. You are wide of the mark if you hope by executions to silence all censures of your evil conduct. That way of escape is neither very effective nor very honorable. But there is another way easier and far more noble: do not crush others, but look to the bettering of your own lives. I have made my prophecy, and have done with you who condemned me.

He warns his condemners of those who shall rise to vindicate him;

they have played the coward's part, and uselessly.

XXXI. And last with those who voted for my acquittal I would talk over this event, while the authorities are busy, and before I go thither where I must die. Remain with me that little while, my friends. There is nothing to hinder our talking together until I go; and I wish

He turns to those who voted to acquit him,

to point out to you, as my well-wishers, the significance of what has happened to me. A wonderful thing, O judges, — for you I may rightly call judges, — a wonderful thing has befallen me. Constantly before this the wonted sign, the warning voice of the daemon, has come to me and opposed me in the most trivial affairs if I chanced to be going wrong. And now you see what has befallen me, this calamity which might be called the greatest of all evils; yet neither this morning when I left my house, nor when I came up here to the court, nor during the whole course of my speech, — not once has the divine warning deterred me. And this is remarkable, for often on other occasions the sign has stopped me short in the very midst of what I was saying. But now through this whole affair it has not once opposed me in what I have done or said. You ask how I interpret this? I will tell you. It indicates that everything has happened for my good, and that those of us who think it an evil to die are quite wrong in our notion. It must be so; the accustomed sign would have warned me, had I not been in the way of good.

and declares that not once has the divine warning come to him during the trial,

and infers that death is a blessing.

XXXII. But we have other reasons for hoping confidently that death is a blessing. Consider a moment. To die must be one of two things: either the dead are as nothing and have no perception or feeling whatsoever, or else, as many believe, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. If, now, there is no consciousness in the grave, but deep sleep, as when a man in slumber discerns not even a dream, then will death be a marvellous gain. For consider such a night of slumber when we

And reason approves this:

for death is either a dreamless sleep,

behold not the shadow of a dream; compare all the other days and nights of our life with such a night, and ask ourselves how many of them could be called happier than this night of deep sleep; we should find them but few in number and easily counted in the course of a long life; and this I believe will hold good, not only of us poor mortals, but of the great King of Persia himself. If death is like this, I at least reckon it a gain, and endless time will seem no more than a single night. But if death is, as it were, a journeying hence to another world, where, as men believe, the departed dead dwell together, — what greater blessing than this could you desire, my judges? Will not that be a wonderful journey, if, escaping these self-styled judges, we go to that other world and stand there before those true judges, as the saying is, Minos and Rhadamanthys and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and others of the half-gods who lived righteously in this life? Would any of you count it a little thing to meet Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer, and talk with them? I am ready to die many times if this belief is true. That would be a glorious life for me there where I might meet Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and others perhaps who long ago perished by an unrighteous judgment; and how glad I should be to compare my wrongs with theirs. But the greatest joy would be in questioning the inhabitants there as I do here, and examining them to discover who is really wise and who only in his own conceit. What would not a man give, O judges, to examine the leader of the great Trojan armament, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or any of a thousand other men and women

happier than the labor of life;

or it is a pilgrimage to a better world,

where we shall meet the great and good who have gone before,

whom it would be our infinite joy to meet and question and call our friends. Assuredly they of that world do not put men to death for doing this. They are altogether happier there than we, happier and deathless forever more, if the saying be true.

and join their eternal blessedness.

XXXIII. And ye too, my judges, ought to be of good hope toward death, being persuaded of this one thing at least, that no evil can befall a good man either in life or in death, and that his affairs are all in the hands of God. Neither have these events befallen by chance, but I see clearly it was better for me to die and be released from this labor of life. Therefore not once in my trial was a sign given to turn me aside, and therefore I feel little anger toward those who accused and condemned me. Yet because they did not accuse and condemn me in this mind, but thinking to do me harm, for this they are worthy of blame. And I may make of them this one request: When my sons have grown up, I would ask you, gentlemen, to worry them as I have worried you, if they seem to care more for money and such things than for virtue, and if they claim to be something when they are naught. Do you rebuke them as I have rebuked you for not caring about what they should, and for thinking themselves something when they are of nothing worth. If you do this, both I and my sons shall have received justice at your hands. — And now it is time to depart hence, I to die and you to live; but which of us goes to the better fate no one knoweth save only God.

Let us be of good cheer,

for God is over all.

CRITO.

[Socrates is kept in prison a number of days awaiting the arrival of a ship which the Athenians annually sent to Delos on a sacred mission. During the time of this mission no public execution was permitted in the city. Crito, a man of wealth, is one of Socrates' oldest and most intimate friends. —

It is fitting that the greatest of the Greeks should in his last days have given so noble an example of patriotism, the peculiar virtue of the ancient world ; and that he who had done so much by precept to instil the notion of self-reliance in thought and deed should in the end have given his life rather than transgress the unrighteous decree of the people.]

I. *Socrates.* Why have you come at this hour, Crito? It must be quite early yet.

Crito visits Socrates in jail,

Crito. Quite early.

Socr. What is the hour?

Crito. The day is just breaking.

Socr. I wonder that the jailer would let you in.

Crito. I have come so often that he has grown used to me, Socrates; and besides he owes me a certain favor.

Socr. Have you been waiting long?

Crito. Not very.

Socr. Why did n't you wake me at once, instead of sitting there in silence?

Crito. God forbid, Socrates. I, too, should wish to sleep and forget my anxiety. I have been wondering this long while to see how quietly you slept; and I did not disturb you purposely, that you might pass the time in peace. All through life I have praised the

serenity of your temper, but more than ever now, to see how lightly and calmly you bear this present calamity.

Socr. Why, Crito, it would be folly at my age to fret because death is at hand.

Crito. Other men, Socrates, as old as you, have fallen into calamities like this, but I never saw that their age saved them from fretting.

Socr. Very true; but why have you come so early?

Crito. I am the bearer of news, Socrates, not painful to you, it may be, but to me and to all your friends, painful and sad, — most sad and painful to me of all.

Socr. What is it? Has the ship arrived from Delos, at whose coming I am to die?

Crito. Not yet; but from the report of persons coming from Sunium, where they left her, I am expecting her to-day. It is clear from their reports she will be here to-day, and on the morrow, Socrates, you must end your life.

with news that the fatal vessel is sighted off Sunium.

II. *Socr.* Heaven prosper us, Crito. If it so please the gods, who can gainsay it? Yet I hardly think she will come to-day.

Crito. What reason have you for saying that?

Socr. I will tell you. I am to die on the day after the ship arrives.

Crito. So the magistrates declare.

Socr. Then I think she will not come on the present day, but on the morrow. I draw my conclusion from a dream which I had in the night, just a little while ago; and it is well you did n't wake me.

But Socrates, relying on a dream,

Crito. Tell me the dream.

Socr. I seemed to see a woman, fair and good to

look upon, clad in white robes, who approached me, and called and said: "O Socrates —

predicts that she will not come until the next day.

'Two days and thou to deep-soiled Phthia comest.'" [1]

Crito. A strange dream, Socrates.

Socr. But its meaning, I think, is clear, Crito.

III. *Crito.* Only too clear. But, my dear Socrates, there is still time; listen to me even now and save yourself. You must know that your death will be a twofold disaster to me. I shall lose such a friend as no time or chance may replace; and besides that, many persons who know us but slightly will blame me, supposing I might have rescued you with my money. And what opinion of me could be more hideous than that I valued my money above my friends? Very few will ever believe that you yourself refused to escape when we were eager to help you.

Crito urges there is still time to escape,

and hints at the disgrace to himself

if Socrates refuses his offer of money.

Socr. But, my dear Crito, why do we care so much for the opinion of the world? Good men, all who are worthy of considering, will understand just what has happened.

Crito. But you see, Socrates, we must care for the opinion of the world. Our present embarrassment shows that if the people take a prejudice against any one, they are capable of inflicting the very worst evils.

Socr. Would to heaven, Crito, the people were

[1] *Iliad*, ix. 363. Achilles declares that he will sail home: "And if the mighty Shaker of the Earth grant me good journey, after two days I should come to deep-soiled Phthia. There I have many possessions that I left when I came hither to my hurt."

capable of doing us the greatest evil, if they might equally do us the greatest good. But as it is, they can do neither: they cannot make a man wise or unwise; they do but the bidding of their whims.

IV. *Crito.* That may be all very well; but tell me, Socrates: are you refusing out of consideration for me and your friends? Are you afraid if you escape that the informers will pounce down on us for stealing you away, and that we shall be forced to pay large sums of money, or perhaps our whole fortune, not to mention other risks? If that is your anxiety, put it quite out of mind; there is no reason why we should n't run such risks, or even greater ones, if necessary, to save you. Take me at my word, and don't refuse.

The risk to Crito for bribing will be small,

Socr. Yes, Crito, I am anxious about that and much else besides.

Crito. Have no fear on that account. There are men ready to get you away and save you for a small sum. And then, you know, it does n't cost much to buy off these informers. My fortune is at your service, and is quite sufficient, I think. But if you scruple to accept so much from me, there are strangers in town ready to pay. One of them, Simmias of Thebes, has brought a sufficient sum of money for this very purpose. Cebes is also willing, and a host of others. I beg of you, then, do not from any fear of that sort hesitate to escape; and do not, as you said in court, hang back because you would not know what to do with yourself in exile. You will be made welcome in many places; and if you choose to go to Thessaly, I have friends in that country who will make much of you and see that no one there annoys you.

and if Socrates will go to Thessaly he will be well received.

V. And besides, Socrates, are you quite justified in throwing away your life when you might save it? Are you not doing by yourself what your enemies would desire, what in fact they actually did desire when they sought to destroy you? And more than that, you are, I fear, betraying your own sons. You are abandoning them when you might rear and educate them; you are leaving them to the mercy of chance, and their fortune will be the usual lot of orphans. Either a man ought not to have children, or else he should go through the hardship of rearing and educating them. But you apparently are choosing the easier part, rather than the part of a brave and good man, — you who profess to make virtue the aim of your whole life. Indeed, I am ashamed for you and for us, your friends. This whole affair will be attributed to our sloth and lack of courage, — the permission of the trial when it might have been blocked, the way it was conducted, and last of all this miserable fiasco of letting you die in prison when, if we were men of any spirit, you might easily be rescued. Do you not see, Socrates, that all this is discreditable to you and to us, as well as painful? Consider, then — or rather the time for that is past: our plans are made and we must act. There is but one plan, and everything must be done this coming night. If we delay longer, all is lost and we are helpless. With all my heart, Socrates, I beg you to yield and not refuse.

He appeals to Socrates not to leave his children orphans,

and points out the disgrace of the whole affair.

VI. *Socr.* My dear Crito, your kind zeal in my behalf is very precious; but is it well directed? Otherwise, the greater the zeal, the more the danger. Let us reflect whether we should do as you bid;

for I am now and always the same man, and I can hearken to no other claim or desire except only to that voice of reason which seems to me best on consideration. I cannot now in this time of trial reject the reasons that I have given before. These sound to me now as they did then, and I still reverence and honor them. Unless, therefore, we can think of better reasons in the present, be assured I will not yield, no, not even if the all-powerful multitude terrify us tenfold worse with bonds and executions and confiscations, and all their hobgoblins made to frighten children. How shall we consider the case most fairly? Shall we take up this matter of opinions which you appeal to, and go back to our old discussions of them? We used to agree; but were we right in concluding that certain opinions of men ought to be heeded and others neglected? Or were our arguments very well before this necessity of death came upon me, whereas now it is clear that we were only bandying words, indulging in jest and nonsense? Help me, Crito, to look into the argument and see whether it will appear to me, as I stand now, in quite a new and different form, and whether we shall dismiss it with a godspeed or heed its admonition. Those of us who talked seriously used in the past to say, as I said just now, that certain opinions of men ought to be highly esteemed, and others not at all. Tell me, I adjure you, Crito, was not this well said? You, in all human calculation, are not going to die to-morrow, and no such thoughts will disturb your judgment. Consider, then, was it not well said that not all opinions are worthy of respect, nor the opinions of all men? What do you think? Is it not well said?

Socrates replies that now as always he must listen to reason alone,

for the opinions of the world are worthless.

Crito. It is well said.

Socr. And we are to respect good opinions and not bad?

Crito. Yes.

Socr. And the opinions of the wise are good, and those of the unwise bad?

Crito. It could n't be otherwise.

VII. *Socr.* And what did we say about training? If a man is in hard training, will he heed every critic who chooses to praise and blame and give an opinion, or only his physician or trainer?

Crito. Only the latter.

The gymnast heeds only his trainer;

Socr. And so he will fear the blame and rejoice at the praise of this one man, and disregard the crowd?

Crito. Evidently.

Socr. And he must live and exercise and eat and drink so as to satisfy this one man, his manager and trainer, rather than all the rest of the world?

Crito. As you say.

Socr. Very well. And if he disobeys this one man and disregards his opinion and commendation, out of respect for the ignorant crowd, will he not come to grief?

for if he listens to the ignorant mob,

Crito. He certainly will.

Socr. How and with what result? What part of him will suffer for his disobedience?

he ruins his body;

Crito. His body, of course; he will ruin it.

Socr. Exactly. And in brief, Crito, is it not just so with everything else? And in what we are discussing now, right and wrong, foul and fair, good and evil, ought we to follow the opinion of all the world and stand in awe of it? Rather, if there be any one

man who has knowledge of these things, ought we not to feel shame and fear before him more than before all the world? For if we do not follow him we shall injure and ruin that part of ourselves which grows better with right-doing and perishes with wrong. Or am I quite mistaken?

and so it is with the soul.

Crito. You are right, Socrates.

VIII. *Socr.* There is, then, a part of us that is made better by health and injured by disease, and you will agree that life is hardly worth living if we ruin this part by following the opinion of the ignorant. And this part of ourselves we call the body, do we not?

Life is not worth living with a ruined body,

Crito. Yes.

Socr. And is life worth living with a corrupt and vitiated body?

Crito. By no means.

Socr. But is life any more worth living with that organ vitiated which is deteriorated by wrong-doing and improved by right? Is the body more precious than that part of us, whatever it be, which has to do with evil and righteousness?

or with a corrupt soul;

Crito. By no means.

Socr. This is rather of more honor, is it not?

Crito. Much more.

Socr. I think, then, my dear friend, we need trouble ourselves very little about what the world says of us. Let us look to the opinion of the one man who knows what is right and wrong, — and to truth herself. And so your first proposition was wrong, that we should listen to the voice of the multitude in what is right and fair and good and the contrary. — But still, some one may retort, the multitude has power over your life.

Crito. Very likely, Socrates, and with truth, too.

Socr. No doubt. And yet, my friend, this present discussion resembles strangely one of a former occasion. We agreed then that not life but living well was to be prized; does our conclusion still hold?

and life is not the great aim, but living well.

Crito. It still holds.

Socr. We agreed that living well is the same as living honorably and uprightly; and does this still hold?

Crito. Yes.

IX. *Socr.* So far agreed. It only remains to determine whether my attempt to escape hence, without the permission of the Athenians, would be upright or wrong. If it appears upright, let us make the attempt; if wrong, let us forego it. As for your considerations of expense and reputation and children, I fear they are like the considerations of the thoughtless multitude who put us to death and would as lightly bring us to life again, if they could. Our argument has at least made one point clear: we have only to consider, as I was saying, whether we shall be acting uprightly in paying money and gratitude to those who are to get me away, and in planning and sharing this escape, or whether we shall be acting quite wrongly. And if it should appear wrong to act thus, then I fear we must not take thought of the peril of death we incur by remaining quietly here; we must suffer anything rather than do wrong.

Therefore reputation and children must not influence him,

but only whether it is right to escape.

Crito. I think you are right, Socrates; but what is to be done?

Socr. Let us examine the matter together, my [1] if you are able to find flaws in what I

say, do so and I will surrender. But if not, then, pray, as you love me, no longer din this old story into my ears, insisting that I ought to escape against the will of the Athenians. Indeed, I want very much to act with your approval and not contrarily. Look well to the beginning of the argument, and try to answer my questions as seems best.

Crito. I will try.

X. *Socr.* Are we never of our free will to do wrong, or under certain circumstances is the rule relaxed? Is it quite true, as we used constantly to admit, that wrong-doing is never in any way good or honorable? Have the events of these few days played havoc with all our fine arguments of former times? and have we, Crito, talking gravely together all these years, like old men as we thought, been no nearer the truth than children? Or is it uncompromisingly true, as we used to think, that all wrong-doing under all circumstances is an evil and a disgrace to the wrong-doer, no matter what the world says, and no matter what we may suffer for refusing? Is this true?

Wrong-doing is never right;

Crito. Quite true.

Socr. And we ought in no wise to do wrong?

Crito. In no wise.

Socr. Neither if we are wronged should we return the wrong, as the world commends; for wrong-doing is never right.

Crito. So it seems.

Socr. And what follows? Ought we to do any man evil?

Crito. We ought not, Socrates.

Socr. Is it right or wrong to return evil for evil, as the world bids?

neither is it right to return wrong for wrong,

Crito. It is never right.

Socr. For to do evil to men is no different from wrong-doing.

Crito. True.

Socr. So we must not wrong any man or do him evil, no matter what we have suffered at his hands. But look, Crito, that you do not make this concession against your real belief; for I know that very few men believe this or ever will believe. And I fear, too, that between those who hold this opinion and those who do not there can never be any genuine sympathy, for they must mutually despise each other's views. I would start in my argument from this belief, that it is never right to do wrong or return wrong, or to avenge ourselves by rendering evil for evil: tell me, do you yield this point and fully agree with me, or do you object at the very outset? This has long been and still is my belief. If you think differently, let me hear what you have to say; or if you abide by your former opinion, I will proceed.

though the world thinks otherwise;

Crito. I abide by it and agree with you; do you go on.

Socr. I will proceed, then; or rather let me question you. If a man enters into an agreement right in itself, must he perform his part, or may he slink out by deceit?

neither may we violate a covenant.

Crito. He must do his part.

XI. *Socr.* Go a step further. If we escape hence without the consent of the city, are we not doing an injury, and that to those whom we ought least to wrong? and are we abiding by our just agreement?

Crito. I can't answer your question, Socrates; I don't quite understand.

Socr. Look at it in this way. Suppose I am about to run away — or whatever you call my escape — and the laws and commonwealth should come to me and say: Tell us, Socrates, what do you propose to do? Is it your purpose by acting in this way to destroy us, the laws, and the whole city, so far as your influence extends? Do you think it possible for a city to exist and avoid utter ruin in which the decisions of law do not stand valid, but are set aside and nullified by individual citizens? — What should we reply, Crito, to questions like that? One of our orators might say a good deal in favor of the law, now threatened, which commands that judicial decisions stand valid. Perhaps you would have me retort on the laws that the city has wronged me and given a false decision?

Socrates represents the laws as pleading with him and saying,

he will do them a wrong if he escapes,

Crito. A fair retort, Socrates.

XII. *Socr.* But suppose, then, the laws should say: Was this our agreement, Socrates, or were you to abide by the decisions of the city? — And if we hesitated in surprise at this speech, perhaps they would add: Do not stand dumb at our words, Socrates, but answer; for question and answer is an old trick of your own. Go to, now; what is your complaint against us and the city that you seek to destroy us? Do you not owe to us your life? Did not your father wed your mother by our aid and beget you? Speak out; have you any fault to find with those laws among us that regulate marriage? — I have none, I should reply. — Or with the laws that regulate the kind of nurture and education in which you were reared? Were not we wise, we who had charge of this, in directing

and will be breaking his covenant with them.

Under the laws he has been born and bred,

your father to educate you in music and gymnastics? — Yes, you were, I should reply. — Good! And now since you were begotten and nurtured and educated under us, dare you once say you are not our offspring and servant, you and your fathers before you? And this being granted, dare you say that the right stands equal between us, and that you may presume to pay back in kind our treatment of you? Would you have any right to retaliate on your father or your master, had you a master, returning word for word and blow for blow? We think not. And now will you retaliate on your country and its laws? Because we propose to take your life, deeming it right so to do, are you, the boasted searcher after virtue, ready to destroy us, your country, and your country's laws, and will you justify such an act? Are you grown so wise as to have forgotten that a man's country is more honorable and august and holy than mother or father or the pride of family, and is more reverenced by gods and enlightened men? Have you forgotten that a man ought to revere his native land in her wrath and yield subservience to her more than to his own father, obeying her commands, and suffering her chastisements, whether she punish us with blows or bonds? if she leads us into battle, there to endure wounds or death, that here, too, a man must follow, for so righteousness demands? and that he must not yield nor give way nor leave the ranks, but in war and in court and wherever he may be, he must do as his city and country command? Have you forgotten all this? You may use persuasion with her, as nature permits; but if it is impious to offer violence to mother or father, how much more impious so

and he owes to them deeper allegiance than to father or mother,

and dare not retaliate upon them.

to treat your country? — Have we any reply to such words, Crito? Do not the laws utter truth?

Crito. I admit they do.

XIII. *Socr.* See, then, O Socrates, perhaps the laws might continue, see, then, if we speak the truth, how great a wrong to us is your present undertaking. We bestowed upon you life and nurture and education; we gave you and the other citizens a share in all the good things we possess; and still more we announce and give authority to every Athenian, when he has come of age and has seen the laws and administration of the city, to take his property, if we do not please him, and depart whithersoever he wishes to any colony or foreign state: there is no law to hinder or impede. If after this any man remains, having seen in what way we administer justice and the other affairs of the city, then we affirm that such a man has by his very act ratified an agreement with us to do whatever we command; and we affirm that he who disobeys us does a threefold wrong: he disobeys those who gave him life, he disobeys those who nurtured him, and he breaks a solemn compact. We have given him his choice: either to follow our commands, which are indeed not severe, or to alter us by persuasion if we are wrong; yet neither of these things will he do.

If a man abides in a city,

by that act he makes a covenant with it;

he may alter the laws by persuasion, but may not violate them.

XIV. Of such blame we say that you will be guilty, O Socrates, if you do as you now intend, — and you above all other Athenians. — If I should ask them, Why me especially? no doubt they would reply justly, that I in a peculiar manner have entered into this compact with the city. And they would say, Is there not great and sufficient

Socrates especially has made such a covenant,

proof, O Socrates, that we and the city satisfied you? Certainly, unless it satisfied you in some particular manner, you would not have clung to the city more persistently than all other Athenians. You have never left it even to go to the festivals, except once to the Isthmus, nor to journey anywhere else unless on some military expedition. Other men travel about, but you never; nor have you shown any curiosity to learn the laws and customs of other states, but have always been content with us and our city. You have loved us with a great love; you have agreed to pass your life under us; and you have even begotten children here, as being fully satisfied with the city. At the time of the trial you might have proposed exile as your penalty, and so have done legally what now you are undertaking against the will of the city. But at that time you put on a bold face as not grudging to die if needs be, and preferred, to use your own words, death to exile. And now you do not honor your own covenant, and have no respect for us whom you propose to destroy. You are acting like a wretched slave, undertaking to run away contrary to your compact and agreement to live under us. Come now, tell us first of all: Are we not right in saying you agreed to live under us, and that not by word but by deed? — What shall we reply, Crito? Must we not admit this?

for more than any other man he has clung to the city.

Crito. I fear we must, Socrates.

Socr. Thereupon they would ask: Are you not then violating your compact and agreement with us, which you made under no compulsion and under no deception? Neither can you claim any lack of time for counsel, for any day these seventy years now you might have departed, if we did not satisfy you and

the covenant seemed unjust. You have shown no preference for Lacedaemon or Crete, both of which you admit to be well governed, nor for any other city of the Greeks or Barbarians, but have journeyed hence less than the very lame and blind and crippled. Evidently the city pleased you above all other Athenians, — and we, the laws, too, for who would be content with a city devoid of laws? And now will you abide by our covenant? We think so, Socrates, if there is any persuasion in us. We would not have you bring ridicule on yourself by running away.

XV. For ask yourself: What good will come to you or your friends by such a transgression and breach of honor? It is pretty clear that your friends will themselves incur the risk of exile and banishment from the city. And you, if you go to one of the neighboring cities (Thebes or Megara, for example, which are both well governed), will come as an enemy of their government, and all who have any regard for their own city will look askance upon you as a subverter of the laws. And you will confirm the opinion of the judges and justify their sentence, for the man who subverts the laws may well be regarded as a perverter of the young and unformed. Or perhaps you will avoid well-governed cities and law-abiding men? But will life seem to you quite worth while if you do? Or will you appear before such men with effrontery and talk — talk of what, Socrates? Of virtue forsooth, as you do here, and of justice and institutions and laws, calling them the most precious of human possessions? Would that be quite becoming in Socrates? Hardly, we think. But such places you will leave, and will go

And how will escape profit him?

He will endanger his friends;

in peaceful states he will be shunned as a law-breaker;

to Crito's friends in Thessaly, for there the greatest disorder and license prevail, and no doubt they will be delighted to hear of your absurd escape,— how you ran away from jail, begirt in some queer attire, a shepherd's hide or the like, after the style of runaway slaves, and with your face disguised. And will there be no one to say: Look at this old man; in all likelihood he had but a few years to live, yet he has transgressed the most sacred laws in his mad and greedy desire of life? You may be spared such reproaches if you take care to offend nobody, Socrates; but otherwise you will hear much to your shame. You will live the cringing slave of all the world, — and doing what? feasting and revelling in Thessaly, as if you had gone a journey to Thessaly for a dinner. All your fine sayings about justice and the other virtues, where will they be then? But perhaps you desire to live for your children's sake, that you may rear and educate them? So! Will you carry them into Thessaly, and as a great kindness rear and educate them there to be foreigners? Or if they are brought up here far away from you, will they be any the better that you are alive? Your friends, you think, will take charge of them. But will your friends care for them if you go a journey to Thessaly, yet neglect them if you go that other journey to the world below? Hardly, if there be any profit in these so-called friends of yours.

in disorderly lands there is only dishonor for him;

and in exile he will avail his children nothing;

XVI. Hearken to us, Socrates, who raised you up. Do not think first of children or life or any such thing, but rather of justice; and so, when you come to the world below, you shall make a good defence before the rulers of that realm. It does not appear

that either you or any of yours will be happier or juster or holier in this world if you follow out your design, nor will it be better for you when you come yonder. Now if you depart, you go as one having suffered wrong, not from us, the laws, but from men; but if you depart hence, having returned wrong for wrong and evil for evil, having violated your compact and agreement with us, having wrought harm to those who least deserve it, to yourself, your friends, the city, and us, — if you depart with this guilt upon you, we shall be angered against you in this life, and in death our brothers, the laws of the world below, will receive you anything but graciously, for they will know of your attempt to subvert us. Beware, and hearken not to Crito's words rather than to ours. —

and in death the laws of that other world will avenge the laws here.

XVII. Crito, my dearest comrade, such words I seem to hear, as the mystic worshippers seem to hear the piping of flutes; and the sound of this voice so murmurs in my ears that I can hear no other. I warn you, so far as I can now judge, whatever you plead against it, will be in vain. Yet if you still hope, speak.

Crito. There is nothing I can say, Socrates.

Socr. Enough, then, Crito. Let me proceed thus, for God leadeth the way.

CLOSING SCENE OF THE PHAEDO.

[The last day of his life Socrates passed in conversation with his most intimate friends. Plato, who had heard Socrates' defence, was not present on this occasion, being kept away by illness. In this dialogue he represents Phaedo as relating the events of the day to his friend Echecrates. The conversation which Phaedo is supposed to report is a long and elaborate discussion of the immortality of the soul, and certainly does not convey the words or even the thoughts of Socrates. And noble as the arguments are, enriched with all Plato's imagination and subtle reasoning, we would gladly exchange them for a simple record of the Master's real words. We may suppose that the future life was much in his thoughts on this day, and that he spoke with less of irony and more of solemnity than was usual with him. In the intimacy of this friendly circle and with death awaiting him, did he express any firm conviction of the soul's immortality, or did he repeat the doubt uttered in the Apology when he declared that if he claimed to be wiser than another in any one thing, it would be herein, that having no certain knowledge of the life beyond he pretended to none? — It is probable he remained faithful to his doubts.

The actual circumstances of his death, which are related in the concluding chapters of the dialogue and are here given in translation, Plato must have heard from eyewitnesses and doubtless reports with tolerable accuracy. The scene is one of the inimitable masterpieces of literature, and no translation however inadequate can entirely efface its beauty. Hardly elsewhere will words of such pathos be found, — of that legitimate pathos which stirs and elevates the heart without silencing the imperious reason or subduing the will. —

Socrates is supposed to have concluded a long mythical account of the other world, and continues as follows below.]

LXIII. "AND because of these things I have told

you, Simmias, a man ought to do all in his power to lay hold of virtue and wisdom in this life; for noble is the prize, and the hope great.

Socrates concludes his fable of the other world,

"A man of understanding will hardly insist that these things are exactly as I have related them; yet he will believe something of the sort in regard to our souls and their future habitation, seeing that the soul is immortal, and he will be ready to venture his all on that belief, for noble is the venture; and with such fancies he ought to charm away his doubts, and that is the reason I have dwelt so long on the fable. Let us then be of good hope for our souls, if in this life we have passed by the pleasures and adornments of the body, as being alien to us and bringing rather increase of evil, and instead of these have longed for the pleasures of knowledge; let us be of good hope, I say, if thus making fair the soul with her own unborrowed adornments, with temperance and justice and courage and nobility and truth, we await the journey to the other world, ready to depart when the fatal hour summons. You, Simmias and Cebes and all of you, will set forth one day each in his own good time; but even now the fatal hour summons me, as a tragic poet would say. It must be already time for the bath; for it will be better, I presume, to bathe before drinking the poison, and so save the women the trouble of washing my dead body."

and bids his hearers be of good hope.

The fatal hour that must come to all now summons him.

LXIV. And when he had done speaking, Crito said: "So be it, Socrates. And now have you no commands for any of us in regard to your sons or any other matter in which we may serve you?" "Nothing, Crito, beyond what I have already

His parting command is

said. I bid you take heed for yourselves, and thus, whatever you do, you will serve me and mine and your own selves, though now you promise nothing. But if you neglect yourselves and are unwilling to direct your lives in the footsteps, as it were, of what has now and formerly been our talk, then you will avail in nothing, no matter how numerous and earnest your present protestations are." "We will strive to do so," said Crito; "but in what way shall we bury you?" "However you wish," he replied, "only you must catch me first and see that I don't slip away." And then smiling quietly and turning to us, he said: "Why, my friends, I can't convince Crito that I am this Socrates, the one who talks with you and argues at length. He thinks I am that other whom presently he shall see lying dead, and so he asks how he shall bury me. All the words I have spoken to show that when I drink the poison I shall no longer remain with you, but shall go away to some blessed region of the happy dead, — all my words of comfort for you and for myself are thrown away on him. I must beg you to go bail for me with Crito, as he did with the judges; but in a different way. For he pledged that I would remain, whereas you must give your pledge that I will not remain after death, but will fly away. So I would have Crito bear the matter more lightly, and not be troubled at my supposed sufferings when he sees my body burned or interred, nor say at the funeral that he is laying out Socrates, or carrying Socrates to the grave, or burying him. For you must know, my dearest Crito, that wrong words are not only a fault in themselves, but insinuate evil into the soul. Be brave, therefore,

that they take heed for themselves.

They may bury his body as they wish;

he himself will have flown away.

and say you are burying my body; and indeed you may bury it as seems to you good and as custom directs."

LXV. When he had said this, he arose and went into another room to bathe, and took Crito with him, bidding us remain where we were. So we waited, going over among ourselves the previous discussion, and again talking of our great calamity, for it seemed to us we were to pass the remainder of our lives as children deprived of their father. And when he had bathed, and his sons (two quite small and one older) were brought in to him, and the women of his house came, and he had talked with them and given his parting commands in the presence of Crito, then at last he sent away the women and children and came back to us. And it was near the setting of the sun, for he had remained a long while within. So he came and sat with us after the bath, but not much was spoken. And presently the jailer appeared and approaching him said: "I shall have no fault to find with you, Socrates, as with others who are provoked and curse me when by order of the magistrates I bid them drink the poison. During all this time I have found you the noblest and gentlest and best man of all who have ever come here; and I am sure you will not be angry with me now, but with those whom you know to be responsible. You understand why I am come; it is farewell, and try to bear as lightly as you may what can't be helped." With that the man burst into tears and turned to go out. And Socrates looking up at him replied, "Farewell to you, I will do as you bid." Then turning to us, he continued:

He withdraws to bathe;

and, having bid farewell to his women and children,

he returns to his friends.

The jailer announces the time has come;

"How courteous the fellow is; all the while I have been here, he has been coming to me and talking at times, and has shown himself the kindest of men; and now how generously he weeps for me. — But come, Crito, we must do as he orders. Let some one fetch the poison, if it is prepared; and if it is not ready, bid the man prepare it." And Crito said: "I think, Socrates, the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and has not set. And I know, too, that others take the cup quite late after the notice is given, eating and drinking abundantly and even indulging their other appetites. Do not hurry, for there is still time." Then said Socrates: "Naturally those you mention, Crito, act so, for they suppose it is a gain to them; and it is natural that I should not act so, for in delaying the draught I see no other profit than the winning of my own contempt for clinging greedily to a life that is all but spent already. Come, I beg you, do as I wish."

Socrates acquiesces,

and rebukes Crito for bidding him seek delay.

LXVI. Thereupon Crito, hearing this, made a sign to his slave who stood by. And the slave went out and after a considerable time returned bringing the man who was to give the poison, and who now carried the cup ready in his hand. Socrates saw the man and said: "Very good, my friend; you understand these matters; what am I to do?" "Noth-ing," he replied, "except drink the poison and walk about until your legs grow heavy; then lie down and it will work of itself." And so saying he handed the cup to Socrates. He received it quite cheerfully, Echecrates, never trembling or changing color or countenance; but looking up at the man with that steady gaze of his, he asked, "What say you? is it permitted to make a libation to the gods from this

The cup is brought;

cup?" "We prepare only what we think a sufficient draught, Socrates," he answered. "I understand; but at least we are permitted, nay, obliged to pray the gods to grant us a happy journey from this world to the other. So I pray, and so may it be." And with these words he raised the cup to his lips and drank, very calmly and cheerfully. Until then most of us had been able to hold back our tears pretty well, but when we saw him drinking and the cup now drained, it was too much. In spite of my efforts my own tears began to fall fast, so that covering up my face I gave myself to weeping, — not for him, but for my own hard fortune in losing such a comrade. Even before me Crito had left the room, unable to restrain his tears. As for Apollodorus, he had never left off weeping the whole time, and now between his sobs and lamentations he broke out into a loud cry that completely unnerved us. Only Socrates remained quiet and rebuked us, saying: "What a thing you are doing, my dear friends! For this reason chiefly I dismissed the women, dreading their disturbance; for I have heard that a man should die in peace and silence. I bid you be quiet and brave." At this we were shamed by his words and ceased from weeping. He meanwhile was walking about; and when now his legs grew heavy, he lay down on his back as directed. The man who had given the drink felt his feet and legs from time to time; and finally pressing his foot hard asked if he felt anything; and Socrates said no. After that he pressed his knees and so upward, showing us he was growing cold and rigid. And Socrates himself felt them, and said he should leave us when the numbness reached

and, with a prayer for a happy journey,

he drinks the poison.

He chides his friends for weeping;

and lying down

his heart. He had now veiled himself in his mantle, but when he was beginning to grow cold about the groin, he drew the covering a moment from his face and said: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius.[1] Do not forget to pay it," — and these were his last words. "It shall be done," answered Crito; "but have you nothing else to say?" He made no reply to this question; but after a little while there was a movement, and the man uncovered him, and his eyes were fixed. And Crito, seeing him, closed his mouth and eyes.

quietly meets his end.

LXVII. So passed away our friend, Echecrates, who was, I think, of all living men I have known the best and the wisest and the most just.

[1] The customary sacrifice to the god of healing. Socrates would playfully call death a release from life's fitful fever.

PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY

OF PROPER NAMES IN "THE JUDGMENT OF SOCRATES."

The Diacritical Marks given below are those found in the latest edition of Webster's International Dictionary.

EXPLANATION OF MARKS.

A Dash (¯) above the vowel denotes the long sound, as in fāte, ēve, īme, nōte, ūse.

A Curve (˘) above the vowel denotes the short sound, as in ădd, ĕnd, ĭll, ŏdd, ŭp.

A Dot (˙) above the vowel a denotes the obscure sound of a in pȧst, ȧbate, Ämericȧ.

A Double Dot (¨) above the vowel a denotes the sound of a in fäther, älms.

A Wave (˜) above the vowel e denotes the sound of e in hẽr.

A Circumflex Accent (ˆ) above the vowel o denotes the sound of o in ôrb.

ĕ sounds like e in dĕpĕnd.

ŏ sounds like o in prŏpōse.

ṣ sounds like z.

ġ is soft as in ġem.

g̃ is hard as in g̃et.

Achilles (ȧ-kĭl′lēz)
Adeimantus (ăd-ī-măn′tŭs)
Aeacus (ē′ȧ-kŭs)
Aeantodorus (ē-ăn-tō-dō′rŭs)
Aeschines (ĕs′kĭ-nēz)
Ä′jăx
Ănăxăg′ōrăs
Antiochis (ăn-tī′ō-kĭs)
Antiphon (ăn′tĭ-fŏn)
Ăn′ȳtŭs
Ăpŏllōdō′rŭs
Archon (ăr′kŏn)
Arginusae (ăr-jĭ-nū′sē)
Ărĭs′tŏn
Aristophanes (ăr-ĭs-tŏf′ȧ-nēz)
Ăsclē′pĭŭs
Ăthē′nĭăn
Căl′lĭăs
Cebes (sē′bēz)
Ceos (sē′ŏs)
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Delphi (dĕl′fī)
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Echecrates (ē-kĕk′rȧ-tēz)
Ĕkklē′ṣĭȧ
Ē′lĭs
Ēpĭġ′ēnēṣ

Euripides (ū-rĭp′ĭ-dēz)
Evē′nŭs
Gorgias (gôr′jĭ-ăs)
Hĕc′tôr
Hē′rä
Hē′sĭŏd
Hĭp′pĭăs
Hĭppōnī′cŭs
Lacedaemon (lăs-ē-dē′mŏn)
Lē′ŏn
Lēŏntī′nī
Lycon (lī′kŏn)
Lȳsăn′dēr
Lȳsā′nĭŭs
Mĕg′ärä
Mēlē′tŭs
Mī′nŏs
Musaeus (mū-sē′ŭs)
Nīcŏs′trätŭs
Odysseus (ō-dĭs′sūs)
Oligarchy (ŏl′ĭ-gär-kȳ)
Ōlȳm′pĭc
Orpheus (ôr′fŭs)
Pălămē′dēş
Păr′ălŭs
Pā′rĭăn
Pätrō′clŭs
Phaedo (fē′dō)
Phthĭa (thī′ä)
Plā′tō
Prŏd′ĭcŭs
Prȳtănē′ŭm
Pȳth′ĭăn
Rhădămăn′thȳs
Săl′ămĭs
Sĭm′mĭăs
Sisyphus (sĭs′ĭ-fŭs)
Sŏc′rätēş
Sphettus (sfĕt′ŭs)
Sū′nĭŭm
Tĕl′ămŏn
Thē′ăgēş
Thēbeş
Thēŏd′ŏtŭs
Thēōzŏt′ĭdēş
Thĕs′sălȳ
Thē′tĭs
Thrăsȳbū′lŭs
Trĭptŏl′ēmŭs
Trō′jăn

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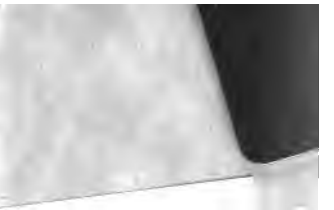

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